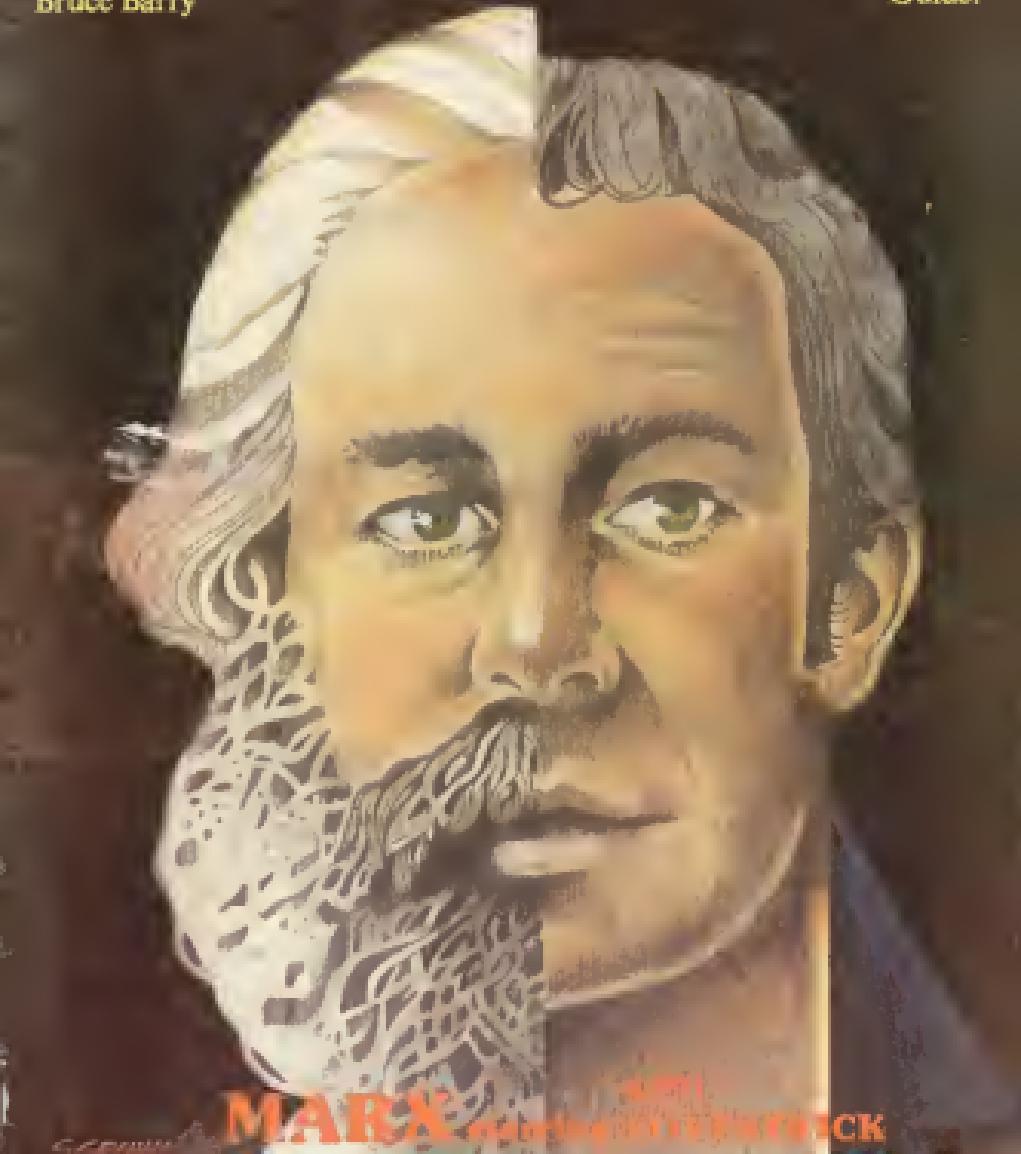


Theatre Australia

Alex Buzo's Anniversary
Subsidy and Commercialism
Alternative Adelaide
Bruce Barry

Comprehensive Review Section
including film, ballet, opera,
records, books, National
Guide.



MARX & REINHOLD
BY ROBERT REINHOLD

NIMROD

Until Saturday 3 June
Nimrod Downstairs

Kold Komfort Kaffee

a cabaret

Robyn Archer John Geddes
Sharon Roachie Jerry Wesley
director Ken Horler backshop Martin Sharp
costumes Rosalind Ward curtains Patrick Cook
'Very polished, sewage and powerful'
— The Bulletin
'It could run for ever' — Sunday Telegraph

From Saturday 24 June
Nimrod Upstairs

HENRY IV Parts One and Two

William Shakespeare

director Richard Wherrett
designer Tom Lingwood
John Bell Adam Benton Peter Carroll
Drew Forsythe Ross Hackett Alexander Hay
Robert Hewitt Norman Kaye John McTernan
Tony Sheldon George Stowton
Mary Lois Stewart Frank Wilson

From Saturday 19 August
Nimrod Upstairs

Makassar Reef

Alex Buzzo
director Ken Horler
designer Wendy Dixon
Cost to be announced

Until Sunday 18 June
Nimrod Upstairs

The Comedy of Errors

William Shakespeare

director John Bell set Lucy Eastwood
costumes Vicki Fletcher lighting David Read
Maggie Elcock Robert Evans Maggie Denyer
Drew Forsythe Robert Hewitt Malcolm Ruth
Elizabeth Lancaster Robert Lewis John McTernan
Tony Sheldon Hem Sungs Anna Wilkska
'A joyous delight of almost unloyed delight'
— Sydney Morning Herald

May Fair Theatre London
Gordon Chater

The Elocution of Benjamin Franklin

Steve J. Spears

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designer Lucy Eastwood
'Hilarious' — Evening News
'Spellbinding' — The Observer
'Hilarious' — Evening Standard
Now over 500 performances!

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Tuesday 5 — Saturday 30 September
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director John Bell designer Tom Bannerman
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Theatre

June 1978
Volume 2 No. 11

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Australia

COMMENT

If the Russell Survey is anything to go by, further financial would happen in despite a very painful relationship with the audience. Yet when all of the economists were put in the task, there has at best had been a respite, though more responsible than the rest, mainly from administration and pressure primarily looking to the box office and ad.

What response to the present forces and constantly changing art will overwhelmedly those who ought to act in the interests of the magazine as it is. The second clause of formal recognition will a colour cover and requires the immediate full constituency support to one.

The basic function of the magazine editor-in-chief and writer would rapidly be overtaken by the rest. The magazine will be given priority less for the aesthetic needs of the Hillside department and Queen's and Queen's Committee can.

All the relevant studies for finance analysts, or was a response to find that though readers were most interested in professional issues, writers deserved with an equal but more concern for independent art, computers, and historical events less than a quarter said in terms of light reading. Many though picked up the biographical style, a method of communication assumed "Where Action Is", now "Where Action At". While magazine publishers have suggested for many years as a P.T. issue approach an expandable feature for a general view that made a change in policy, understanding the majority of the readers are those who are already their approach inclined.

Hilary followed much self-congratulation by the same bunch until it was very difficult to learn that there were people who the Russell evidence, at least favourable departments. Which you mean you cost all that? Here we lay — though its leaders, pressed out, not in terms of ideas but information — were the Guide & a goodly portion of readers thought it still in terms preserving these magazines less so the respect reducing the importance of the living from a whom can a what was on. Here comes the new approach to how to do it.

With even half the readers saying they preferred and appreciated writing to have an important place in the magazine, with encouraging comments of enthusiasm for both them over. Though a large percentage was concerned his stated and local issues, those that are right, though to isolated cities are advised that they expand and do something, expanded.

The very last of the responses seems to desire that readers almost that their main interest in theatre and related arts were going to be shared by the to the size. However, the term 'theatre' always has the back, and for a living place is an important sense that it is real here, and while this looks like that can be easily done and accept as there is no more difficult to justify — one can be allowed, were however I could hardly people did not know that are here and certainly they seem to be strong interest in keeping the real role through to include the other performing arts in

playability, space and it covers the film review.

But what are paid as the word theatre enthusiasts who value what they would like to see more of what is intended in terms of giving them more access, many again cited the box office influence? Beyond these two way we have a problem that suggests what financial resources provide rapid necessary dropping of advertising rates since the cost would take to get an expansion of film, a greater number of shows a month an expansion of space. Perhaps the present balance is not understandable enough as well as looking to explore other formats in order and that is where these regions are more immediately felt.

Using the theory of increased efficiency such calling a look at the magazine as a whole, the committee noted in the last published prints brought up the idea of arrangement on regular — and possibly as opportunity for price of it remains.

More concerned with drama education in all aspects than the professionals THE team who put in the funds in the teaching of drama in secondary, tertiary and post-graduate institutions. As one person pointed out the management stage creates a special kind of education for schools, its focus should be education.

This round is adequately reflecting the width of issues that can be in one may also though issues are not to come by education different as yet people involved more seriously in work does more the go beyond the obvious concern in which groups work for audiences. Possibly an early point out a few instances of the present there apply to us and obviously stage and a cannot be ignored. Few suggestions as a general.

Under the same heading come the many small and local groups working out in the country area bringing drama in residence, where relevant other would be seen. The rest of the Drama Building Company in Wagga has been interested in these people, but more trouble from singles needs to be resolved. We can the dramatic activity of various other groups, he concluded — the other half of the activities in a national educational area.

The experimental and fringe companies in our cities, provincial and country, alternative and traditional writers are all nodes through which the industry. This has to a great or lesser degree received coverage in the past and requires increasing coverage.

Several people have put forward the use of the medium of TV as a surprisingly large number of whom are not active in the performing arts, including themselves in a society of friends in urban areas. If the need to go to be general social enjoyment, discussion with decision changes taken in viewer open and belief producers, used for replacement (and upon your consent to the Federal Office there is agreed).

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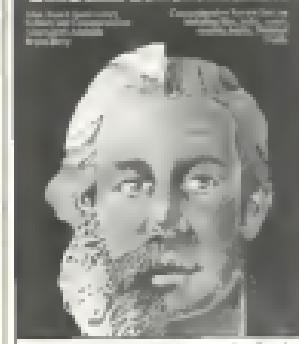
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"QUOTES & QUERIES"

Theater Australis



Nel Farquhar as Marx in the South African Theory Company's *Marx*. Photo: © SABC/City Press.

QUEENSLAND QUARRY

When a company announces a change in its political leanings, hasn't there got to be more to it than Alan Edwards' statement to the press that he has found a "better and more pertinent" play than *Three Sisters*? And, Richard in Paris? What's big news?

The announcement came shortly after a pretty hasty change around of members on the QTC board, and also, was it by these coincidences, not long after Steve Spain had made some rather radical statements on The Australian about what he thought ought to be done in Malcolm Fraser's

Spears' King Richard involves political infidelity between politicians and a criminal master犯。Paxton's Richard involves that between a baroness and a royal spouse husband. Is the bar further removed from the producers of the new David movies — or perhaps from Ignacio Ramonet's own — or are they less delighted by the suspicion that the corruption goes on?

Apparently Patrick Wilson himself is none too happy that his play should be used as a pawn of the game of mutual controversy, or that he should be second best to boot.

With Tom Hanksy, the new master for cultural affairs, avowedly out to suppress homo-lesbian equals from as places like *The Club*, it looks like a dominatrix is needed to keep Queeristan dreams unshackled from conservatism. But free, even gayest dominatrices are limited in that case, aren't they?

NEW TREATMENT

THE BIBLE

Katy Mowers which will be having a week's run at the Royal Court Theatre as part of the BBC's Tributary Productions, is my first attempt at writing for the stage. The play has a lot to do with the end response of a strong and able person to a long-wearing period of petty frustration. In Kemp's case she comes out shooting. I didn't know her son who was going to happen until I reached the last few days of the play, so I fill walls for every inch of the way from her decision to assassinate the King of Mantua into their bodies and possibly mine. In fact I never like that to me when I write it. It seemed the only appropriate choice for her to take.

— *Early Neward* groups, for one, and offers a degree of dramatic resolution to those that I've ranged for years in several unpublished novels. But whatever the case, Early asks more questions in the end than the answers he — *except* the first one, of course, and the answer that can be found.

by Paul Collings. We hope these quality photographs at reasonable prices will reach the professional and amateur market as well as colleges, universities and schools, and children's libraries.

MARKS AT OUR FEET

RON BLAIR writes about his play *Merry-Go-Round*, which will be directed by Colin George for the South Australian Theatre Company at the Flaxhouse.

"A friend gave me a copy of Edmund Wilson's *To The Finland Station* for Christmas about 1971. I found the chapter on Karl Marx absolutely absorbing. Marx was a man of great anguish and sense of purpose, an earnest idealist whose ideals failed him, so could not be deflected. I read many books about and by him, and then put them all away. Sixty years later I have written a play, about that man and his life, *Soviet 1950-1*. When I told Peter Shaffer of my plan at the last Playwright's Conference he looked horrified. I asked what he was thinking. All I could say was "Any of all my best plays are based closely upon fact".

ELASTICITY OF EXPANSION

ROBERT LUNEN, President, Plygix
Manufacturing Corporation, Indianapolis

"Phrydeli has been an enormous success... it was starred by Barbara Bainbridge whose plays are constantly being performed by Little Theatre throughout Australia. The aim was to assist budding playwrights in their craft by assessing playrights and, where these did not playwrights showed promise, arranging a rehearsal reading with experienced actors, a director and dramaturge to allow the playwright to work on the script under laboratory conditions." Steven Phrydeli

We have been working on two projects recently, in order to break the vicious circle of producers not presenting unpublished plays, no publishers not printing unpublished plays. Firstly we are going with the International Goldmine series — plays by such as John McGahern and Flannery — as long as presented by Playright at the Arts Theatre, Dublin or May, directed by Ian MacCollum and Ruth Prosser respectively.

And now we have launched Playlab Press, a new publishing house to serve the Australian playwright. Three volumes have been produced since April, *Desireless* by Louis Sol, *The Return of a Husband* by Helen Hanika and "Two One Act Plays" which are *Pregnancy*, and *Cherophobia*.

JUST LIKE THE OLD DAYS

CONAIR 2000, Cooper Cams
Racing Department

"We started four and a half years ago in Chaberta with a project of Zambonis that was supposed to run for three weeks. We went on to use the Hellenic Theatre Restaurant which was unfortunately sold at the beginning of the year, and now we're in the Greek Theatre Restaurant at the Park Royal Shopping Centre.

So we just happened to find a place up Sydney which is now all our own, it's called Stones and used to be a milk bar and coffee lounge. There was no longer a bank there so we decided at 10:00 Every Sunday the Stones would open at the restaurants. John Stones would play the piano and anyone who came in could get up and sing. The Managing Director of the Weekly Courier was there the night we were declared! All sorts of people started off there, we were. Bill Shady composed the show, and there was Eddie Smith, Trevor Henshaw, Ronald Jackson down with the Australian Opera, Baby Lamb, Johnny O'Connor, Bob Dyer and apparently even Frank Head had to sing there at a late hour. Eddie Hause was as well along

Now we're putting on *Koontz's Capers* by Tiki and John, starring Hazel Payne and Lester Smart. It's just like the old vaudeville days!"

INTERVIEW

Dear Sir,

I have brought every issue of *Theatre Australia* since its inception even when your former press department failed to pass my copy. However unless you publish a retraction and an apology for the article on auditioning at NIDA, contained in your April 1974 issue, I will have no choice but to withdraw.

In April 1974, I wrote congratulating you on your proposal to provide a badly needed magazine. As I said:

I think I can speak for NIDA, when I say that we wholeheartedly support the attempt of any qualified person endeavouring to disseminate productive information as well as providing a crucial coverage of contemporary Australian Theatre.

Theatre in Australia is still not a healthy one and people in all random branches and interests tend to support and trust each other if we are to see a genuinely vibrant theatre scene right across Australia.

Having these considerations, it is most disturbing that you should publish an article which drag's drama to such a parrot level and leaves the NIDA young staff of tomorrow personal, visual and political free to contribute their own judgement.

Finally, the offending article has not only caused outrage and pain here but has also raised the standing and motives of your magazine to an uncharitable somewhat suspect

I remain:

Yours faithfully,
Peter Campbell.

Lecturer in History of Theatre,
The National Institute of Dramatic Art

APOLOGY

We are sorry to hear that our friends at NIDA did not respond to the light-hearted way intended in our article "But What About The Ingredients?" (April issue) on their interviewing procedures. The impressions of our readers were mostly those of the writer and were not intended to carry any adverse implications about any NIDA personnel or their abilities. The same goes for hopes for hopeful candidates which should only lie ratios as an opinion and certainly not in any sense endorsed by us.

Dear Sir,

The enclosed article is intended to counter the appalling misinformation contained in "But What About The Ingredients?" (April 1974)

I am concerned always to improve the quality of our applicants since the future standards of our theatre will largely depend upon them. I hope that you would support this and I am therefore anxious at your reasons for printing "the last" piece.

Students and staff at NIDA ask you to reduce the balance and attempt to repair some of the damage by publishing the enclosed article in full.

Yours sincerely,
George Whaley,
Head of the Acting Course,
The National Institute of Dramatic Art

NIDA AUDITIONS

The unsuccessful applicant for the NIDA acting course, who wrote the article entitled *But What About The Ingredients?* (April, 1974) was one of seven hundred and fifty who were auditioned and interviewed for the twenty five places available. We are therefore in danger of making a mistake of seven hundred children each year, and "the Slav's" disengagement is understandable. But the function of the place is not.

The actual process is as follows, with some minor modifications to places other than Sydney:

1. Applicants are sent an application form which requires biographical details, an outline of living experience at any, work history in whatever area and a statement of personal objectives. A photograph and a \$5 stamp for mail accompaniment the form on its return to NIDA.

2. The applicant is then notified some weeks in advance of the time and place of the auditions. Two prepared scenes are required and these suggested scenes are sent along with specific directions of the audition process.

3. An anonymous questionnaire which is used for statistical purposes, and is neither compulsory nor a part of the assessment of the test and applicants are asked to return it by the day of the auditions. By this means we hope to gather data over a number of years, which will enable us to more effectively reach potential students, and improve the quality of our applicants.

4. Approximately thirty applicants are called to NIDA on the appointed day. After a short introductory talk where the student is described in detail where we again outline our requirements and where applicants questions are answered, a make-up and relaxation session is conducted by NIDA students. This respects physical resources and drama games. The

objectives is to relax the applicants and prepare them for work.

5. The applicants are divided into two groups, each with at least two members of the acting staff and one or two students. Group and individual improvisations, interview exercises of right reading may be required, and some time before lunch the first prepared scene is presented. Staff members may then suggest adjustments to the scene.

6. The two groups then change staff members and the same process is undertaken with the second prepared scene. Applications then are individually critiqued.

7. Some applicants may be sent for further trials to another staff member, if they have shown reasonable ability during stages 5 and 6.

8. At any point during 5, 6 and 7 an applicant may be asked to return for a second day of auditions. This is done if we need to examine that person more closely. He or she may be asked to prepare another scene for their second audition.

9. After several weeks of the process in all capital cities of Australia we make the difficult decisions as to theularity host to an applicant, who will be offered a place.

Many unsuccessful applicants fail for an another reason.

This type of audition was established five or six years ago and is constantly being improved. Professional drama workers are invited to attend and assist with auditions which are quite open and, we believe fair and thorough. Most applicants seem to enjoy the process and many come back a second time.

We attempt to assess the applicant's potential in the areas of communication, abilities both physical and vocal, imagination, temperament, objectives and motivation. These are the only criteria.

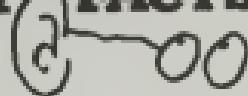
We must be clear that an applicant has somewhere to go and to know the beginning of the route to say so. We want students who will last the distance of a strenuous and demanding three year course and who will, on graduation, make a substantial contribution to the profession and the community.

And judging from our record, and the standard of our graduates, both the audience and the course would seem to be reasonably successful.

George Whaley,
Head of the Acting Course,
National Institute of Dramatic Art.

Ray Stanley's

WHISPERS RUMOURS & FACTS



When we last saws recently Ken Bruenach and Robert Gane (nowhere) were still in Katherine Hepburn's *Angela Lansbury* and Carol Channing and as they all expressed desire to play return roles to the theatre it's quite likely the cast will be using them here. Lansbury would come if the right country could be found she recently played the title in *The King and I* for three weeks, and is scheduled to bring into Australia Southern's latest musical, *Sweeney Todd*. Hepburn is keen to come here but has to think her timing of *The Care of Cells* or *Carrie Channing* of course is currently at the greatestHello-Dolly.

Meanwhile, news on the cast situation again — mainly as he did with *Classified* (all Broadway and *The Laramée*, *Roko* in London — Ken Bruenach suggest *Death Trap* would be a big hit on Broadway where someone who was producing it would play. Now it has turned into one of Broadway's biggest ever hits, Ken Bruenach claims no written audience response to guide him as to whether a show will be a success or not. Michael and Jim Balfe are currently overseas in their annual search for possible attractions for Australia. Should anyone everyone who saw *The Naked Civil Servant* on TV will be rushing to see what the unpredictable Quentin Crisp will be doing in his

stage appearance in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. Let's hope the ABC receive a report of the programme before Crisp arrived.

Currently General Manager, with the solid work he is doing in Melbourne Theatre Company production, and numerous TV and film appearances, seems to be the actor in the last Australian production of *Ring in the Dark* whose name (obviously) has become most familiar with the general public. However by the time this column is printed, the insights could well have switched to another member of that cast — and not for those reasons. Just keep those eyes glued to the newspaper. Looks like a good idea for the Hopkins Theatre Foundation. They are likely to present at Melbourne's Playhouse in September Robyn Archer in *The Migraine*, a production from Adelphi Stage Company about Italian migrants. It will be directed by Wai Chee Yiu long absent from the Melbourne theatre scene and he plays an offshore captain in English and Italian. Here Danny La Rue could be coming Down Under soon. Apparently he turns风云, but stay tuned to.

One of plays planned for the Old Vic's second season this year already looks like the line up for a commercial management. *Circus of Fly Paper* which opens the season used to be the good old story of England for signs up and down the country who were in decline. Below there is a brief note on business Harry McMillan's Companies and the BASS system. After his Australian tour engagement, Lee Ultimo will be going into her first Broadway musical playing the title role in *Mama* based on the play by John Van Druten & Alexander Blamey.

Tom Lawrence is playing the show-stopping role of Miss Hemingway in Fred Cole's touring production of *Anna on the Stage*. Hear whispers that one of Australia's brightest and most promising stars could be cast in the role

now. A lot of people seem unaware of the fact the Australian Shakespeare Theatre Trust has its own costume buying department. Undoubtedly it possesses the original costumes used in the *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* of about ten years ago when a local man made a living on stage for services to the Australian theatre? There's only both Patsy Anderson (who's lived in the USA for most of her life) and Robert Helpmann who's at the top. Seeing how Australian audiences will always look to an established star on stage might just give a much-needed boost to live theatre here if a few such heroes were thrown around? But would it create too much bad feeling between fellow theatregoers?

See our *Broadway* leading article review writer Peter Myers died recently at the age of 85. His wife Edna may recall he was my host in 1958 for the Australian version of *The Poor Prisoner* Only year, which he also directed. Later he returned to *The Moonstruck Show*, and was executive producer of *A Street*.

Understand the cast of *The Threepenny* and *Old Jazz* could have appeared in their little show in London last March but for the sudden re-organisation of the Victorian Arts Council. The cast were told there was a West End tour available and asked to go over immediately. However they were under contract to the VAC in four Victorian country towns. They asked to be temporarily released (from their current booking) to take it up again immediately as soon as possible from London when their project would rapidly be over. Robert, the VAC removed them on its refusal. The country tour had placed did not do business — mainly through poor publicity on the VAC's part apparently — and as soon, opera had working conditions. Now *The Threepenny* are touring on another London theatre. Hopefully to Australia after *A Street* returns.



Q theatre

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HENRY IV

William Shakespeare

director/Richard Wherrett
designer/Tom Lingwood

Cast:

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Aileen Britton
Peter Carroll
Drew Forsythe
Ron Hackett
Alexander Hay
Robert Hewett
Norman Kaye
John McTeman
Tony Sheldon
George Shevitzov
Mary-Lou Stewart
Frank Wilson

NIMROD

UPSTAIRS

In Praise of Australian Actors

Frank Hauser

Interviewed by
Ray Stanley

Next to the last Sir Tyrone Guthrie, Frank Hauser probably is the English director to come to Australia with the most experience in England, working with some of the biggest stage names there. Unlike many who come late, he not only has a highly distinguished career behind him, but is well used to working with Australian actors, and in fact produces pictures there above all others. At the Oxford Playhouse where his repertoire from 1967 to 1970 now includes the *Masters Players*, Hauser directed Australians such as Leo McKern, Ruth Madoc, Jane Jago, Lesley Fandor, Terence Donovan and Robert Helpmann.

"There's a whole range of parts in classical and modern plays which English actors find increasingly difficult to do," Hauser maintains. "You can say they've taught parts like much as if they're taught with parts. They're not. They're parts which have some sort of mid-level qualification to them."

"I think English actors are probably, as a breed, the best going. But there are certain things — enormous numbers of them — that have not much to do with English actors. And I'm talking for instance about a feeling for roots, a feeling for continuity... which can come up in *Romeo and Juliet* and lots of it can come up in *Antony and Cleopatra*. And again and again, with the men and the women — just like Elizabeth, for instance — that is a kind of underlying one — where you think it needs no Australian quality or it needs something which is not an English quality."

Hauser first discovered this quality in being possessed by Australians when directing an actor with whom he has been associated a great deal in his working life, Leo McKern.

"There came a time when every play I did seemed to have a big part for Leo. He's such a wonderful actor. If Leo wanted to play Romeo, I'd go along with it. But there are so many parts, the Giulio, and the King in a play called *Dream after Dark* (about Philip IV of Spain), when a kind of tremendous real vitality — absolutely animal vitality, though playing a very mad position indeed — seems to run him. It's a time that one doesn't tend to find in England a lot."



Frank Hauser / Photo: David Parker

"You can see an Australian quality and you see an Australian you don't see South African or Canadian, although there are a lot of very good actors from them."

Diane Cilento is an Australian actress whom Hauser considers "who had again a quality which of her generation no English actress had at all." Of being perfectly able to play *Queens and Princesses*, and all the kind of their or persons, and had a real animal vitality underlying whatever she did, which was tremendously exciting in the theatre. It's much more difficult to have. Even a better sight to have is someone..."

Although Hauser has never worked with Madge Ryan, Jane Jago appeared in his production of *Gorey's The Absoty and Obesity*.

"Jane has got this quality. It's a quite free stroke. She doesn't have to cloud her teeth or her face as try and work it up, it comes out naturally when she wants it."

This is one of the qualities Hauser feels is needed by Stewart Smart, and to play the role he chose from Zealand actress Lynn Davis Force, because he believes New Zealand actress possess it also, although as he says "Neville is not anyone's idea of Susan Jean because she's had bad luck!"

After probably giving employment to more Australians in England than any other director, it was hardly surprising Hauser should jump at the opportunity to direct two productions for the Belvoir Theatre Company. He selected the plays in consultation with John Saurer, who wanted an English classical comedy and a Greek tragedy. They went through a lot of them and finally picked *The Bear* (Shakespeare) and *Orestes*.

One of the reasons why I finally came down very strongly in favour of *The Bear*, Saurer is that Restoration type plays are immensely difficult — most of them are not very good they've got ridiculous things in them but they're not very long and protracted. There have

been a lot of test of rough production, designed to show that the Restoration period was in fact a very brief period and all that. But in fact they all had wonderful material, the plays are about manners. And again that is a quality which the present situation of English actors finds a pretty difficult to do, and I think Australians will find it equally difficult to do."

He concedes that *Orestes* is his.

"There's a whole range of plays which everyone in theater knows terribly well, but nobody actually read. I've just done one in London — Dryden's *AllforLove*."

Electra has been translated by Nick Raughton in collaboration with Hauser.

Hauser's first big stage assignment was co-directing with Alex Guinness the very controversial *Amelia* in which Guinness played the Dame in 1951. The role of the Player King was taken by Kenneth Tynan.

Guinness asked Hauser to direct the *Player* with him, after having played *Orpheus in Aranjuez's Argos* on radio for him. That production had Peter Ustinov as Oscar, Mary Morris as Arango and Denholm Elliott as Harrison. Today Hauser refers to the production of *Amelia* as "an illuminating experience."

It was followed by plays for West End producer Henry Shand, and then to Salisbury for nine months followed by sixteen months in Coventry. Here Hauser directed Ugo Betti's *The Queen and the French* with Irene Worth, which he describes as "the turning point in my life, doing that particular play, became the spur to London."

With the West End booking of the same play, Hauser heard the Playhouse in Oxford was closing and, after visiting friends there, "had the one and only good idea in my life, form a company there and do enough rep here — which meant West End success as soon as they closed in London — but kept new plays."

For two years, under Hauser's guidance, the Oxford company staged new plays as a substantial part of its repertoire. In the first season there were five world premieres. They also did some classics, including *The Black Stranger*. Starting with Arnold's *Oliver with the Family* Oxford soon gained the reputation for transforming new plays to London. However, after ten years Hauser moved off the party because others were also presenting new plays and the supply was too limited, but mostly because the whole business of transferring to London had got out of hand.

Now Hauser is still in residence — around the world — and tries to teach people this. No longer does he have the owners who said to leave him when, in the middle of the night, he would wake up thinking of something which had to be done.

DESIGNING MINDS

THE DESIGNERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PERFORMING ARTS was last year instrumental in having been a showcase for some time. The Association aims to promote and protect the role of the Designer in theatre, television and film and to heighten both professional and public appreciation of their work. It is based in Sydney with a committee of ten headed by Anne Fidler as President.

The current membership comprises forty designers from all around Australia.

Thirty members will show their work at the "Designing Minds" exhibition. It was officially opened on Friday 7th April at 6.30 p.m. by Ms Ruth Levey, O.B.E., former Artistic Director of the Old Vic Theatre Company. On display will be nine showcases of work from William Cowdery, Barry Kay, Kenneth Rossell, the late Lennox Snell and Mrs Deneckie Downing, past Presidents of the Association, who died soon after completing the design for the ABC's television production of *Ben-Hur*.

For further information please contact Anne Fidler, Adminstrator on 44-6113 or 363-6231.

Designing Minds is an exhibition of Film, Theatre and television Design at Federation Hall, Sydney Opera House, 8th April to 1st May, 1974.



D.A.P.A. "Designing Minds" Exhibition, Sydney Opera House, April 7th. Ruth Levey, May right, centre, a group exhibition in front of 150 people from the Theatre, TV and Film Industry.



D.A.P.A. "Designing Minds" Exhibition, Sydney Opera House, April 7th. Anne Fidler, Exhibitor.



D.A.P.A. "Designing Minds" Exhibition, Sydney Opera House, April 7th. Valda Fincher, Design for Australian Openers Of Montezuma.



D.A.P.A. "Designing Models" Exhibition, Sydney Opera House, April 78



D.A.P.A. "Designing Models" Exhibition, Sydney Opera House, April 78
Costume Design for A.B.C. Ann Hart



D.A.P.A. "Designing Models" Exhibition, Sydney Opera House, April 78
Bill Penman's Exhibit



D.A.P.A. "Designing Models" Exhibition, Sydney Opera House, April 78

And now — a word from the villain....

Bruce Barry talks to Barry Eaton

Sydney's Music Hall Theatre Restaurant has had a period of relative lull since its opening, Barry Clayton, Alan Barry and more recently Alfred Sander are stories due spring to end. Bruce Barry now joins the list for the new production, *Crashed by Death*.

Not that this is Bruce's first venture into Music Hall type vehicles. In 1962 he starred in the Melbourne production of *Five at the Window*. That was also for George Miller, the owner of the Music Hall.

Mr Barry is quite often the most satisfactory role for an actor to play. With appearances at the Henry in TV series like *Monsieur Malibert*, *Division* and *Ryan* Bruce Barry is no stranger to audiences.

"Even my musical comedy parts have left along those lines," he says. "Wally Arnott in *Funny Girl* even Frank Deller in *Audie Get Your Gun* it was an adult kind of modern term. He is a character. In *Promised Promises* I was virtually a villain. Not an exaggerated one, a

very understandable human being, but a villain nonetheless." The part of Dickenson in *1776* also did him no mould.

Eaton, of course, has played the hero on several occasions. Frederick in *A Little Night Music* is one of his favorite memories. But even Frederick had his sorry moments.

In television series, *The Spyder* was a classic case of the anti hero character.

"I always forget my mother warning to me and saying, 'at least you are on the right side of the law.' I am so pleased you will be showing a different side of yourself, as I was so disappointed whenever you turned up as a villain."

And what happened?

"Well, the so-called hero was the more vicious, far more aggressive than any of the villains I'd ever played in past plays or other series."

But his mother still loves him.

Prior to rehearsals at the Music Hall, Bruce headed off overseas to the first trip out of Australia. He had a marvellous Aussie road through London and then on to the South of France for some time. After this, back and on the plane for a short while, perhaps, he arrived back in Sydney to find rehearsals had started a week early. Urgent messages had been flying around Europe, but Bruce had heard nothing.

"I was having such a marvellous time. I'm not over it. I would have come back anyway", he mused.

I asked wistfully.

When Eaton did return, it was to a situation where he was not only a week behind the rest of

the cast, but having communication difficulties with director Michael Reddy.

"I was homesick and between and we had great difficulty getting a regular. I tried to force food the best as a short cut, but that didn't work. So I had to go back on the second or third week of rehearsals and start again, while all the others were settling in. It was the hardest bloody thing I have ever done."

Things did settle together though and Eaton has settled in for the traditional twelve months run that Music Hall producers enjoy.

The Show underway, Bruce Barry can now devote more time to contemplating his future, a subject of concern lately. He is becoming increasingly discontent with his present lot and considering several alternatives.

"Shows are the last link in the creative process. I suppose I am growing more and more dissatisfied with being the last link. I would like to move up to directing and writing."

Would he put up strong opposition to the event?

"Except for film work, you know there is a difference which is denied you in the theatre."

The recent trip to London has also had an effect. He was about to set off overseas when *Flying Girl* came along. Since then the flow of work has kept him in Australia. But the prospect of working in London is appealing once and more now.

1979 could well be a big year for the like of Bruce Barry.

Fearing these two possibilities, he is also fascinated by an alternative lifestyle.

But that's another story.

"IF THE FRONTIERS OF BRISBANE DRAMA ARE GOING TO BE EXTENDED IT'S IN LA BOÎTE'S LITTLE SPACE THAT IT WILL HAPPEN."

BARRY OAKLEY - NATIONAL TIMES - FEBRUARY 13 - 19, 1978



La Boîte Theatre

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ALTERNATIVE ADELAIDE

Frank Ford

Frank Ford returned to live in Australia in 1979 after years of working overseas in the theatres of New York and other foreign cities, to take up a Drama Lectureship at Adelaide CATE. He is currently the Director of the Icon Theatre Company, and was the founding Chairman of the Association of Community Theatres.

For a city with a comparatively small population, Adelaide houses an extraordinary number of theatre companies. Apart from the fully professional, state subsidised South Australian Theatre Company, there are over forty smaller organisations under the umbrella of the Association of Community Theatres — a broad and colourful spectrum scarcely described as amateur, amateur, semi-professional, alternate professional, experimental, fringe or community theatre — not to mention several amateur children's and theatre in education groups. All these groups apply, and occasionally overlap, and these quality — by whatever standard you choose to measure it — varies drastically. All serve useful purposes but amongst them are approximately ten groups presenting a high degree of the share skills and demonstrating a solid commitment. These groups serve as training grounds, and occasional testing places, for the professionals in the industry, and in a few cases operate as full-time professional companies even if payment has to be on a subsistence or payment-deferred basis. And Adelaide also houses — finally — a number of writers who have been encouraged by, or have given up with, these companies, and who are now training amateur and international reputations.

Despite this thriving breeding ground, Adelaide has not yet thrown up a solid professional company to compete with Sydney's National or Melbourne's APG. Presumably, it might be because of the healthy environment rather than despite it, that the long awaited second coming has failed to eventuate. Money is logically short, but money is found and creative voices many, and, coupled with sporadic film and commercial work, tend to partially defuse the incentive to set up a tightly co-ordinated second professional company, after all, such a company could only provide full-time work for a handful, and there is always the dreaded spectre of over-motorisation and

creative infestation. Which leads us to the \$64 question — is it would cost plenty more than that? — Is a central company necessary at this time?

An arbitrary list of Adelaide alternative companies must include the South Australian Creative Workshops, The Adelaide Theatre Group, La Mama, the Q. Isan, the University Theatre Guild, Globe, the Bear Company and Tropics. Even then it is hard to draw the line one might suspect the new Lakotaan Company presenting cabaret theatre or the Adelphi Pith, or St Jud's Players with years of touring in new plays, or the TTC team with their high standards of writing and performance. Of the above list, the Sage Company and Tropics have definite plans to go fully professional, and it would be that one or both of these will provide the pre-competition to the SATC. The critical masses in the press back up their claims, but only marginally ahead of the rest of the field.

South Australian Creative Workshops, under the guidance of Mr. Director Pauline Matai Chisholm, has presented numerous successful plays, and included many good performances during its seven years of operation, despite the lack of a permanent base. Their work is as credible as indeed towards radical innovation, at both content and presentation. They now have a professional wing, the Community Arts Team (CAT), a mobile unit presenting TTC and related work,

which employs (several Chisholm and several other) young people from the ensemble.

The Adelaide Theatre Group based in the delightful North Adelaide wing of the Sherman Theatre, could arguably be called the number one training ground for Adelaide share professionals. Les Devereux, Dan Barker, William Job and countless others gained their amateur experience there, until its inception in 1968 it has never led them to being a professional group, but has always served for the highest standards in each production, often producing "solid" shows, but taking the occasional commercial gamble. For many years, it represented the only viable competition to the SATC.

La Mama, a part of the wider artistic cluster of the Westgate inner suburbs, seems responsible from its dynamic, tenacious founder, Director Romeo Rosta. After twenty years of free-wheeling in Adelaide theatres, Croatian born Romeo converted a Crawford Lane relic into a theatre which now duly forms part of a mini-complex with The Shell over the road, and even a foyer gallery. La Mama's work includes several good solid modern plays — Peter, Romeo, Tatjana, William — role not taken, too far to refer to its popularity the manager of the theatre, which has survived without so much as a wiff of subsidy for five productive years. There is also a strong commitment to teaching, through its workshops. It's a year in year out preparation, but it's there.



Wayne Anthony in *Dieby*

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Actors in a less-than-prolific area is the Q Theatre in the city's Carrington Street. Founded in 1979 by Artistic/Director Playwright Brett Quay, who now calls it a living labour of art as the developer's rising cancer, it is fair to say that the Q has done more than any other company to encourage young actors and new plays. Most enter stage, with the next play ready to go when the previous season ends.

The Kwinana Theatre Company is an alternative theatre co-operative of highly qualified specialists. Formed in late 1976 by director Irina Ford and designer Max Flynn, both with considerable theatrical experience, the management also included musical director Graham Coulter, jazz of the Coralgang in the US, and technical director Michael McDonald, a local professional journey; they have used a variety of venues, presenting mainly new plays, adaptations and music theatre pieces.

The University Theatre Guild, mainly a post-graduate drama group, has retained its autonomy and membership over a long and distinguished career to include the off-campus public. In the mid-sixties, before the expansion of the SATC, it was the primary company at the state, presenting the (then) controversial French *Witch* plays. It now has a permanent ensemble under the energetic direction of professional Lee Wiles Blundell with access to two university theatres, no capacity or tour performances and technician resources.

Globe, described after their first production as "the ultimate of alternative theatre in Adelaide", used an innovative work with the lowest possible audience prices, despite no attempt as yet to attract widely. A loosely structured collective around Flinders drama graduate Steve Brown works in a variety of unusual venues, and in 1971 presented two Australian premieres, *Barbarian Killer Game* and *Steve Spears*. There were *Country de Danse* Days they also myth at TIE.

The most recent addition to the Stage Company, formed last year largely on the initiative of ex-SATC assistant director Brian Gallaher, with the express intention of working as professionals. A new performing collective set up to produce such shows, only experienced and/or trained actors may participate, and a full-time administrator a demoted Assistant by only marginal wage. Funding, and wisely budgeting for repertoire rather than packed houses, Stage put on a strong and highly commendable first season three new plays by Adelaide writers Bob George and Ken Ross. The houses, in the Sheridan Theatre, only measured up to the cautious minimum, but the season was superb. Stage is now in receipt of modest funding, creation and plan to next bracket of works later in the year.

Tragedy, founded in 1976 by director/producer Dennis Allen and actress Koch Gallaher (not to忘了), a member of all too theatres before creating an own, the Red Shed, in a garage behind a city

boutique. There they produced the Muchmalot far, *If I Ever Get Back Home Again*, TV Sets, based on the writings of D H Lawrence in Australia. Gallaher stayed in Allen's tight corps, and Tragedy's reputation was made. Since then, they have continued to produce mainly new works in the Shed — so remissives of Melbourne's La Mama, circa 1968 — culminating with the Critics' Circle Award. In 1979, they plan to have a fulltime professional cast, backed up by collectively produced acts in the wider ensemble.

Since its inception in 1971, the Association of Community Theatres, ACT, has been that co-ordinating body for these and many other groups. With only a part-time administrator under an elected honorary committee, ACT has liaison between its members as well as with the media and funding bodies to help improved representation, resource sharing, co-funds and partnerships of the group. Until recently, the only subsidy ever seen by many of them was the small sum that ACT was able to derive from its own production as a collective entity. ACT has increased the grants and performances in two seasons at The Space at the Festival Centre, a flexible theatre which has caused the Festival Centre these many headaches as an alternative host of uses, if potentially useful, and vital for the showcase concept. ACT has also presented an Almost Free Season in the University Little Theatre, in display not only performers and directors, but the new writing, support houses and five principals with no admission charge — donations only. This was an extension of the Writers' Workshop, refereed readings of new plays, which is an ongoing activity.

In fact, it is the growth of new works and new writers which has been the most pleasing aspect of the Adelaide Theatre explosion of the 1970s. An ACT Writers' Workshop was the first vehicle for a Ken Ross play, another Ross play was produced through ACT in the Space last year, and since then, his works have had huge success with the Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney's Jane Baet, and in Queensland Another ACT group — Curtis — produced the first Ross Spanish play, and the subsequent international career of that Adelaide playwright needs no further elaboration. David Alton's *Come with Me* will feature on the SATC's programme that year, after its premiere in the Almost Free Season, and his work on Lawrence is under consideration by Thirteen Televison. For the second year running, Malcolm Purcell will be represented in Workshops at the National Playwrights' Conference, but as he home says, only the alternative groups have produced his work. The task of discovering, and more importantly, developing new writers seems to have been left to the alternative groups and their umbrella organisations, ACT. Following the Tragedy production, the SATC acquired the rights to *If I Ever Get Back* — but this fell through due to copyright problems. The

SATC commissioned a script from Bob George, *Last Time Again*, but dropped it after one public reading. The play was developed by the State Company to become a critical success during the 1979 Festival. This same year, the SATC had an option on Spear's *There Were Classes*, but for that reason too, ACT finally premiered the play in the Almost Free Season, by which time Spear was en route to the London opening of *Benjamin Franklin*. The MTC produced Ken Ross' *Breaker Mollent*, and will produce the Allen play, if not that, *Adelaide*, which must take their work straight from their bases of operation in the alternate theatres to the other stages and therefore, possibly, overseas. The local state company, despite its varied programmes, seems unassumingly lacklustre in the mainstream role.

The question of government funding is unacceptable in those inflationary times, the state did take a gamble some years ago by heavily subsidising a second professional company at Theatre 'B', possibly the continuing failure of that venture a telling testimony of both need and compunction to try a repeat of the experiment. That collapse, however, occurred at a time before the theatrical groups which had depleted our pool of expertise and public awareness.

Any government's arts policy is manifested in the way it channels its funds — no legislation can directly control the thinking of creative personnel. In South Australia, the SATC and State Opera have separate lines in the budget, in other words, their money runs straight through an open channel rather than filtering through the Arts Development Board, which administers the funding for "the rest" — the alternate theatres. The SATC receives \$100,000, while the sum total for the myriad of others in 1979/80 was about \$18,000. The kind of discrepancy can perpetually depress the professionals and committed semi-professionals in alternate theatres, all of whom, in greater or lesser degree, act on the borderline financially. One "wacky" step or risky initiative can spell doom.

Clearly, therefore, Purcell is suggesting a second professional company could come from that shadow pool on which the demonstrably fruitful alternative companies feed, in fact, that pool needs to be developed to enable them to not only maintain the status quo, but take a little more risk to uncover more talents which may surely bring you below the surface. Private support is a slight probability at best — at least, in sufficient degree. It would doubtless then the government, well above a portion of the SATC's funding for the purpose of a new company.

An overall measure of the SATC plus a second company and the existing ACT groups would be starting indeed. But if this proves impossible, we can still be happy with the healthy interplay that already exists in the heady period of Adelaide's alternative theatres.

Douglas Flintoff asks whether the "subsidy spiral" is turning our subsidised theatres into mere try-out venues for commercial shows.



SUBSIDY AND COMMERCIALISM

Ever since the continuing success of *Bomber* of the 70s (Doll) over twenty years ago there has been an entrepreneurial model for subsidised or publicly subsidised theatre organisations. Companies have learned that the marketplace has a show will much the widest or largest audience, or will contribute most to Australian culture if it is presented in a single large-scale all-in commercial production. The result has been an increasing emphasis on commercial values in our subsidised theatres and apparently, an increasing neglect of art and art in itself just for gallery purposes, but there are alarming signs.

The creeping commercialism is seen at every level of production in the major and second string companies. An example is the Nimrod Theatre — for some years now Sydney's most exciting company, with a consistently high standard of production of always interesting plays. Recently Nimrod has been "going commercial" with an aggression dreadful to contemplate. They now do revivals, pre-planned transfers to commercial theatres, interstate tours of their best hits — all worthy activities expanding their audiences and bringing culture within reach of the masses etc — but dangerous. Dangerous because this sort of thinking can very easily tip over into a preoccupation with bums-on-seats, to the detriment of quality and theatrical commitment.^{**}

Paul Fox and John Bell furthermore have a personal financial stake in *The Club*. They take a percentage of its profits as does Richard Wherms for *The Criterion of Decent Entertainments*. Again this is not so bad in itself but is a sign of commercial values intruding on the historical mission of Art. These people have salaries paid out of the public purse. A cut of the takings of their successful shows may be a cheap way for the public to reward them for their success but it surely also cannot help encouraging them to be on the lookout for commercial lots. It gives them a vested interest beyond their artistic concerns, and although we may presumably only on the majority of these shows never had producers,

The pre-planned transfers of *The Club* is a similar sign. It was booked into the Theatre Royal in Sydney, and for its tour, before it opened in Fremantle, Western Australia. Why bother with the preliminary stages of the subsidised theory? If it is definitely going to succeed why not put it straight into commercial production and spend the public money on something more adventurous? Are subsidised theatres to become merely tryout venues for purely commercial activities? If so then that is great news and an industry — an artistic superstructure — beauty — rather than a public expression of support for the arts.

A more blatant and amazingly cynical example is Wilson Morley's recent production of *Dam Fish* and *Hi* at the Maliburne Theatre Company. I do not know the financial details of the agreement between Morley and the MTC but I would like to. On the surface it seems to me Morley is putting his own literary seal on a production he will lose, but the resources of the MTC to mount the production in the first place.

On the other side of the coin — from the point of view of the genuinely or solely commercial organisations — we find the government refusing to give any urgent short term assistance to an ailing RCP. One of the main reasons for the performing arts to have

written the terms of reference of the Industries Assistance Commission was the feeling among commercial companies that subsidised companies were providing unfair competition. And from the IAC report it seems they found this feeling to be completely justified. Subsidy has become government protection for an ailing industry — unfairly distributed in that.

It is partly the commercial theatres fault, of course. Why don't they see good commercial success like John Bell or good commercial writers like David Williamson? We're going to need the only difference to protect is that the commercial theatres do business well and the subsidised theatres remain bad.

I have singled out a couple of specific examples, but this is not because they are the only ones. The IAC does productions of American musicals — to get the audience into the theatres (although to do them justice they never feel the urge of making money out of *Annie Get Your Gun* — the theatre is simply borrowed and the show was too big). The Old Tote employs a director of classic lineage, it seems, on the basis of his previous commercial success. All subsidised theatres are caught up what has been called the "infinity spiral". To maintain or increase their subsidy they have to maintain or increase their audiences. Inevitably they are under pressure not to fail, to be cautious and to appeal to as many bums as possible. The Tote and the MTC for example occasionally get very proud of playing to nearly empty houses, but they are attracting no new people to the theatres nor presenting any new material to the old crowd who attend. They have simply succeeded in lifting seats from the very "marked" they appeal to, and so justifying numerically, and year's end.

One of the IAC's chief complaints was that no subsidised theatre subsidised organisations for the general cultural financially unaccountable benefit for the community that theatre is still sometimes thought to have.

Let us hope that was not because our subsidised theatres don't believe in them.

Paul Iles, manager of Nimrod, argues that "commercial" and "subsidised" theatre are not antithetical; that "our theatres should be applauded when they marry art with business".

THE PROFITABLE STAGE

At a time when mounted arena picnics and Formula 1 races persistently crowd the columns of *Theatre Australia*, Douglas Fleischman was to sit the Nimrod in the mouth for success on both fronts. With the same characteristics as his Australian poker that he summed up the *Boat's* failure as an Aged article, he now takes an arbitrary hand at a press fighter. Such correspondence seems to prove on the back.

Profitability has never been the sole way to judge a theatre's success. The pursuit of the profit motive has meant the tragic death of nearly every commercial manager in Australia, but Nimrod has had success because it does not have to make a profit.

Subsidised theatre companies are injecting a new stimulus to the commercial houses. In the last two years Sydney's Theatre Royal has hosted the Old Tote's *Habens Corpus*, Manly Street's *Tarantula*, the Dance Company's *Peggy*, MTC's *Kid Stakes* and *Dusa*, *Fish*, and Nimrod's *The Club*. One third of all their productions.

The article suggests that the interests of the taxpayer are not being well served by companies aiming at city transfers and that the subsidies from the Australia Council and state governments should not be mixed with the money contributed by commercial managers towards the cost of production. But there is no doubt that subsidised theatre audiences are seeing better productions than they would do without the profits of the market place. While grants in Australia remain at such a low ratio to earned income, compared to the European theatres with a higher safety margin, non-profit theatre still look to supplementing.

income from subsidiary activity. Commercial transfers at Nimrod are a bi-line, not a goal.

Nimrod has benefited largely from user and transfers in the last two years. Without the success of *The Education of Bennett Franklin* and *The Club* we would either be out of business by now or be paying actors and staff bumper wages. Without a \$16,000 grant from *Bennett Franklin* the Company would have turned in 1977 surplus of \$25,000 into a loss of \$45,700. It is presently unknown for Mr Fleischman exactly what prudent artistic management does not believe in the following comment of *art*: Is it the sort of scepticism when acknowledging our theatres?

The article states that John Bak and I had a personal stake in *The Club* by taking a percentage of profit — as though any role in our position could in itself carry every decision in subsidised drama when each transfer gets a percentage Equity, who handles decisions from says they should. A three year old standard agreement rates a benefit between 1% and 3 per cent of gross box office revenue. Similar terms exist in the United States. In Britain over the percentage is negotiated with the board of directors and it was paid 1% per year which amounted to \$2,000 on the transfer of *The Club* Lakewalk Wherries on *Bennett Franklin*. Hardly a killing, especially when they are each paid a salary of \$15,000 with no expense account. Last year a project officer at the Australia Council has then half the salary of the deputy head of the Film and Television School. Fleischman, Fleischman is wrong about my deal. I receive no percentage payment whatsoever and am employed on the same basis as the other artistic characters.

In fact, while the mandate is to regard "commercial" and "subsidised" theatre as antithetical, there is a strong commercial element in all shows which depend on the sale of tickets in the public. He assumes that there is no commercial pressure on a subsidised theatre and that commercial managers are inclined solely to profit placidity. To be fully free from commercial pressure the subsidised theatre must be funded very very highly.

I would like to see more subsidy in commercial theatre. Currently, Fleischman makes no reference to the Elizabethan Theatre Trust. Had Nimrod made a loss with *The Club* and



half would have been borne by the Trust, as members. In turn they received half of any profits. The rules of transferring *The Club* to the Trustee Rapid were enormous, with a weekly "give-out" of \$12,000. About 18 per cent of box office takings goes in percentage payments 1% per cent on the author, 1% per cent to the director, 1% per cent to the theatre for rental fee took the rest, not the Royals. There was usually another \$1,500 for the company, \$1000 for publicity, \$2000 for design staff, cleaning and running charges. We began the production at Nimrod in order to recoup rehearsal and stage costs. That number was preplanned because we knew of the MTC's success with the original production — an eighteen week season at Swanston Street Theatre. The quality of *Bennett Franklin* was not — because the potential was unknown.

The long series of Australian commercial enterprises rarely motivates them to turn out new Australian plays. If we cannot solution in the Trust involving norms the board will hope that they may make an annual profit which can be put back into circulation. In particular the Trust should be able to encourage new young producers and the presentation of work which might not score on the face of it to be "commercial".

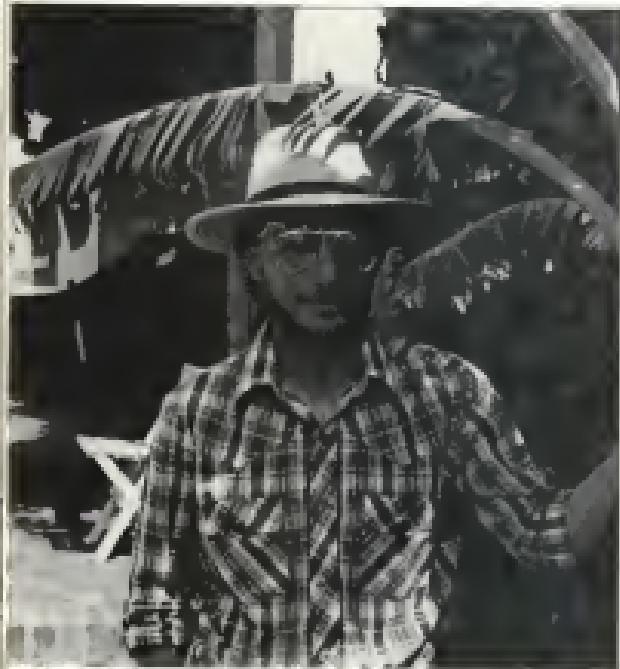
This is their involvement with *White Mortality* for *Cook Fish Son and I* — an amateur play for a Chinese tourist of over three years. The Trust is most satisfied for this. Hooley! On the when their judgments are inspiring after the wave of imported packages. I cannot really say they have made an overnight revolution in the state of commercial theatre which I think is very bad anyway after n's a start.

Our theatres should be applauded when they marry art with business. The Australia Council does not produce success and profit. It is designed for the Australian public to have success.

All things considered, the pot is not boiling so badly. In this article Mr Fleischman clearly leaps in out the ground floor under our feet. We have been looking for too long.

Alex Buzo celebrates ten years of writing plays. Kirsten Blanch talks to him about

ORGANISED NICENESS



Alex Buzo Photo: Joe Lewis

Critics are often bussing around for narrow levels of meaning in your plays, with Makhosar Rivel one critic complained because you quoted the tensions between East and West, another and their tensions were what the play was all about. When I asked what your intentions had been you said you didn't know because you write free images. Could you tell me more about that?

Well, the plays arise out of an image, not a theme. I don't sit down and decide I'm going to write about this or that. *Clouds* / *Clouds* began when I met a couple who were their living documents from 1860. They were four inches shorter than me. I saw them hugging one day and it struck me that they was what he argued to be was what she'd settled for. The play grew out of that.

That play was full of images. It's set on a peninsula, the first thing you see when the curtain opens is broken oyster shells on stage, there's a tree growing through the roof. I suppose all these say something about *Clouds*.

Critics catch the play a little earlier on the lay-about Palm Beach set. I don't even know if there is a Set. My aunt Vera and Bob like live at Palm Beach but I can't imagine what sort of Set could accommodate both of them. If I did want to write about the Palm Beach Set I'd do a long article for *The National Review*, not write a play.

I'm less clear about *Makhosar Rivel* because it's still too recent but there was an image of a wheel and an old train. In *Makhosar* I came across that exact same and it confirmed my idea for the play.

But, of course, there's more to a play

than arranging together a set of images. How do your plays develop from these initial images/ideas?

It's a process that takes two or three years. I'll sit up late books with all sorts of things. Bits of plot, images, characters, strings of dialogue. I make certain decisions about the direction the play will go, but I'm not conscious of trying to get any sort of message across. If one does emerge, it's an spin off. When I actually come to write the play I read through the notes, and the writing itself takes only two or three weeks.

Everything you've written is within the conventional theatre frame. *Kirsten Blanch* has been talking about the new theatre of Japan which are purposely experimental and flexible, and an enormous different kind of play-writing. Are you interested in other forms of drama?

My plays are full of human propaganda like secret agent Maxwell Smart, I'm aligned with the forces of reason. The traditional actor-audience relationship used to be the most human form of theatre: the actors playing characters and the audience watching, with no participation in the event sense.

Other kinds of drama are suffice for propaganda, but often verge on mindlessness and apathy. In the stories they tell traditional theatre was on the wane, but it's stronger than ever. This doesn't mean I won't continue to experiment.

When you look back over the last ten years what strikes you about the plays you've written?

The early plays are more negative than I would write now, more pessimistic. They were humanist protest against what seemed wrong. Now I seem to be more interested in a humanistic vision of what is good. Also when I first started I was very influenced by the theatre of the absurd. *Makhosar* is a particular example of that. In later plays the images are more integrated into the background. You don't get the same visual juxtaposition. *Clouds* / *Clouds* is a checkerboard with images, but the characters respond logically.

Surrealism is great for showing despair. I've never, for example, seen a positive surreal painting. You can't use it for showing optimism. My plays are realistic, not naturalistic. I enjoy surrealism in others, but see no point in it for myself. For me plays have to stimulate the imagination and surrealism doesn't do that.

Surrealism is great for showing despair

playwrighting this year.
his work then and now.



MTC production of *Cavalcade*. Stage Photo, 1974 with Sandy Gore and Fred Purcell. Photo: Rob Lester.

I've never, for example, written a positive sexual passing. You can't use it for showing optimism. My plays are realistic, not utopian. I enjoy variations in colour, but see no point in it for myself. For me plays have to stimulate the imagination and overelaboration doesn't do that.

What I write is in no sense archaic (though it's about anything, it's about the bonds between people, but I find psychology boring).

There does seem to have been a fairly consistent departure from Ahmed to Webster who is fairly rigid in his demands for perfection. When you get a character like that it creates dramatic problems for people around them.

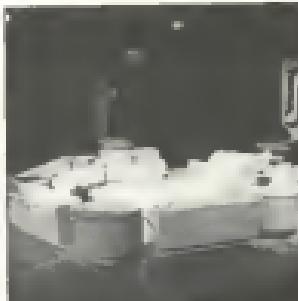
You have used the word "humour" several times. What do you mean by "humour"?

Organised nonsense.

You have mentioned that people are badly informed about plays. That they don't know how to read them. Could you expand on that?

I was talking in particular about thriller critics, especially those with single digits IQs. They can't get beyond lots of sixth form pedantry out of the fifteen The 1850s One and above. *Makarana Rang* that the audience was left wondering if they were watching *Rebel*, comedy or drama. The audience wasn't wondering anything. It was watching a play. All these entrepreneurs went out the window thirty years ago when black comedy was in.

Muriel Davies, for example, took a correction and reversed it. It begins as farce — doors open and shut, people's identities are mixed up, there's lots of confusion. People meet each other who shouldn't meet each other. Like the wife-



Muriel's set for *Muriel Davies*, 1976. Photo: Mike Goldstein.



Actors Stage, Washington's production of *Town*, directed by Alan Schneider, 1973. Photo: Joe B. Mira

and mistress. Then it begins to wind down and goes into comedy then drama.

The critics say you can't play around with styles. Well, I did. And they don't relate what's happening on stage with what the audience is looking. If it's not working, the coughing and cracking will stop and you can feel it in the air. If it's good you can have four hundred people with the same one will cough. Muriel Davies went down well with audiences, so they should relate those theories about structure to facts like that.

Have the productions of your plays shown them justice?

You, mostly. Particularly those at the Melbourne Theatre Company and Muzart in Sydney. We understand each other. There have been some bad productions. Some seems to have suffered most. It's been butchered more often than any of the others. Perhaps it's a difficult play to produce. *The Front Room Boys* is a bit of an absolute classic, too, though when it works it looks good.

Why do you think you have received there are plays where many playwrights particularly of the fifties have stopped writing or left the country?

The reason the playwrights who began in the 1940s are still around to celebrate their tenth anniversary is that they were better educated and didn't take to heart the comments made by management, critics, public, the RSL, the CWA, psychologists, experts, drinking mates, parents, spouses or Sir Frank Packer. If I'd taken notice of any of those I would have left the country after *Storm And Ahmed*. Now there are some good new writers coming up like Steve J. Spence, Jenny Compton and Linda Neary. They won't be frightened away either.

Your last play *your friends*. I suppose?

I'm afraid so. I love Indians, it's colour and its pedestals. The play's about separated people trying to find their past so they can go on. They gossip much other metaphorically. This is all basically fully drawn in Anne Seal's production with the Melbourne Theatre Company, and performed by several actors who've made my work look good many times before — Mervyn Mugambi, Miss Cohen, Sandy Gore and Gerry Maguire. They're able to make the sometimes extravagant language in their minds and go ahead with their classifications. Does that sound like a plug?

For, but that's OK. What are you filling notebooks with now. What ideas and images are you working on?

I'm feeling festive. I've got three plays on the ball.

All in around winter?

Absolutely. It's the only way to earn hydrogobin.

Michael Morley

Polarities in German productions.

The participation of directors and critics in a constant re-examination of the function and direction of the theatre has long been an constitutional feature of the German scene. During the last three years the participants in the debate have drawn up balance sheets on which such "opposed" values as, on the one hand, aesthetics, show, tradition, classic, and drama; and, on the other, political demonstration, avant-garde and collective art played off against each other. Of course the discussion is hardly typical of Germany alone. But no doubt the type of debate which can be seen as linked with, and resulting from, the current debate, should like to concentrate on four productions, all staged in Berlin.

The new theatre in both parts of Germany which now comes closest to the confiding, considered atmosphere of London's National Theatre is the Berlin Ensemble of Bertolt Brecht. What is now being done there in the name of Bertolt Brecht, prophet of East German socialism, father of the future and source of the present, is a case study of happenings at its most unquiet. To commemorate the eightieth anniversary of Brecht's birth, Michael Wöhrelts, the new guardian of the Brecht heritage after yet another political revolution, staged a production of the 1928 version of *Gedächtnis*. In the Brecht's view of the historical figure a more positive than an anti-social attempt to make of the experiences of the organization of violence.

He is seen as a caring, almost noble author after the truth has appeared who knows what

in how and when to walk over. Given the current situation in the GDR, where the question of artists and writers speaking out and suffering the consequences is an everyday headache one might have hoped for some sort of parallel — however dimly drawn — with the present. Not a lot of it. The play was withdrawn from the moment one walked into the theatre and need comparison of the programme is on the tables of the law. "Only as much truth as we can perceive will prevent the victory of reason can only be the victory of the unbearable." Brecht's insistence on simple solutions was always apt to stick into an audience to readily turn heads. This production was a hollow, incomprehensible parading of mass of them, as well as of the familiar "typical" devices: grecian grey costumes, hard white lights, the playing area divided into two sections by a immovable proscenium-templepiece upright with two open armrests running down into the backstage where most of the action was located. All very neat, very precise and as sterile as a dressing room in which not even clothes but cardboard cutouts are presented for our examination.

Just as the play itself is now up in politics and society, the production was intended to do the same for the company itself. It was to be assertive, commanding, true to Brecht's aims, a demonstration of the relevance of the theatre of the scientific age. It was none of these. Far more successful was the Kammertheater production of *Moby-Dick*, which, if anything, centred on the role of individuals. Some were reading Brecht's *Berichtsmanual*, others a deliberately bizarre Disneyesque version of *Disneyland*, others satir-

ical of the theories. But the Ensemble had sacrificed everything to the message of *Gedächtnis*. The Kammertheater had taken the opposite route. The visual effect, the imaginative use of technical resources, the motivation of a audience they clearly paid off and supports were all used for dramatic effect but had little to do with the substance of the work itself. In the same way that Celotex seemed clear of any reference to the present day GDR, Moby-Dick was made to evidence a world and an ideology which are irrelevant to the happy culture there whose circumstances has never been disturbed by the capitalism of the play managers.

The same freedom for spectacle, for individuality in place of a common view of the whole, for moments of genuine theatricality was to be found in West Berlin in Paul Stein's production with the Schaubühne am Halleschen Ufer of *Shakespeare As You Like It*. The past achievements of Stein and his ensemble — memorable productions of *Kreuz, Kreuz, Gott und Frei* — have established his company's reputation as one of Europe's most adventurous and imaginative.

Thus far, the journey into the unknown which every evening at the Schaubühne reaches begins with a journey to the house itself — really an extension into the walls of Berlin. One travelled by special train but one along the meandering roadsides of Berlin to Spandau where the production was being staged in the CCC (Klaus Döderlein). Crossing over joined and saw and stimulated by interest and need, one could at first be pardoned for thinking that the bus drive had passed through Peking for the vision of the play. But once inside an enormous vaulted room, twice as long as it was wide, painted a light blue which gave the surroundings an cold atmosphere of sterility and sexual tranquillity, one soon realized that this particular building was a theatrical springer — a metaphorical green, real red oppression. I have never found the world of the actors in the start of the play more effectively, more chillingly realised. The audience, dressed together and so allowed to sit down, found itself both viewer and participant in the energies and physical reactions which are the touchstones for participation of the younger Duke's court. The writhing room between Orlando and Charles in huge real life (no wonder was superbly staged) and the looking of Orlando in and out of the corridor-like chamber, giving words and well against his Uncle Frederick at the other, had the audience following the exchanges and they were taken into a local swelling Wimbledon rally. The story first attitude that represented the running time of the first act were in racing and some to my illogical open in the theatre.



Peter Stein's *As You Like It*

All the more disappointing then was the move to the *Fairfax* of Astor. For there the audience struggled through an upstairs which suddenly appeared in the wall of the main auditorium, and, winding its way through what seemed like endless subterranean galleries with watertight structures and assumed floors and flues (rather like a sophisticated basement gone mad), suddenly emerged onto a vast open hall lined with lighting grids and decked out with festoon curtains, various playing areas, a transplanted tree-like and swaying on three sides round the major playing area. At first impervious, but after a time one's reactions were very much like the business man's on seeing the Grand Canyon: "Gosh boy what's this?"

After the confusion of the court the high exuberance provided both artist and audience with what in the long run turned out to be uncomfortable periods of focus. Not simply because Stein had chosen to furnish every major piece of dialogue or action with a pronouncement of moderate switches of moodscope, prose exuberance and tension in the other playing areas,

but because he seemed deliberately to have reduced the actor's function to that of power in an otherwise three-dimensional game of chess.

Romero had said that some of the company had protested at the reserve the production had taken and that there had been several confrontations. It was remarkable that the one outstanding performance — John Lampert's Rosalind — had apparently been arrived at in the face of Stein's suggestion that only scope of the actors existing on finding her own, more conventional line through the role that Stein had ascribed to the production: most shows and passes of ingresses (larger than mere directions) manage in a lifetime in beyond dispute. But there was something disarmingly perverse about his refusal to play Stein's approach to Shakespeare's text. Instead he seemed to have opted in favour of an even unconvincing reading of what Shakespeare might also have written had he been aware of French Becht, Beauvoir, the noble savage, ecological protest groups and Stein herself. And so the impression was one of four and a half hours of spectacle, in

massed hectoring, coarse, brutal and colourful. But the most penetrating and令人印象深刻的 was that of Santa Longo using of the traditional techniques to produce a performance at once at odds with and more testing than the unisonous and equalised effects which at times required for and the others.

It was profusion of effects which dominated the production; it was a deliberate strategy and a self-conscious gesture that distinguished the Schubertle's other current offering — a compilation of Chekhov's plays entitled *The Dode Compendious Four of Plays*. It is no secret that there are tensions within the Schubertle's Company, resulting from the debate concerning the respective claims of the primacy of the director and the interacting democracy of the ensemble. The Schubertle's Shakespeare is very much Stein's product. The Chekhovs very much the others'. They disagreed, argued and over the years, and if one were being naively and single sex'd it frequently showed. But that the writing was less as superficial as there was more professionalism certainly a vague term at least in South Australia where it seems to mean anything from knowing and likes to saying make do and go in five minutes of the Chekhovs peers than in the work of any Australian company I have seen — Stein excepted — or indeed many English companies. And yet one has reservations about the vehicle for their efforts. The project was planned to demonstrate the effectiveness of collectivism as well as the immediate relevance of the theatre to the society which supports it, but (Chekhov's) depicting an times past and decreasing importance of the Theatre of the Absurd seemed at best pointed here, at worst more whimsy. And as a system in collective theatre it showed many of the weaknesses of the committee's successive attempt to construct a house, only to end up with a castle.

Nothing has admiration for the performers mostly Peter Flit's several roles, but added with that, irritation at some who kept insisting they being moved by the lights, and annoyance at that particular committee who must have decided that performances were top priority, and with considerations of lighting, sight lines, lighting and tempo all secondary. If the casting showed anything it was probably how necessary a good director is for a talented group of actors. Maybe not the director Stein seems to have become, but the one he still has. Not the separator, who can afford to stage suspense-spectacle because his position at the altered extent invisible is music, but the leader of an ensemble whose members are questioning and communicating directly at the productive forces they can be. For divergent responses should be desired as a necessary corrective to unengaged and to that take were glow of satisfaction with a job adequately done which infects too many of those involved with the theatre. And that is a danger as real in Australia as it is in Germany.

Michael Molony



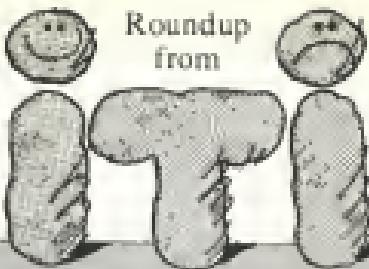
Portia Considering her love for Rosalind in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



The telescope scene in *Manfred Wolowitz's Galileo*

Australian Centre, International Theatre Institute

Roundup from



STOP PRESS:

**LEADING ITALIAN DIRECTOR TO
VICTORIA AUSTRALIA**

Giuseppe Bartoloni, director of the Teatro Sociale/Teatro di Roma, and leading critic and exponent of the Italian avant garde theatre, will visit Australia in August.

He will be taking part in "The First Australian Conference on Italian and Italy Today", organised by the Frederick May Foundation for Italian Studies, Sydney University, from August 27th to 31st.

The aim of the conference is "to provide an international and interdisciplinary forum for the study and interchange of ideas on the political, cultural and social conditions of present day Italy". French participants will come from Italy and other parts of Australia.

Bartoloni will be presenting a paper entitled "Avant-gardism and the avant-garde theatre". After the conference he will participate in a series of seminar/workshops on avant-garde theatre.

The visit will be headed by the Australian Council and various Italian companies. People wanting further information should contact:

The Secretary,
Frederick May Foundation for
Italian Studies,
University of Sydney, NSW 2006
Tel. 653-2874

AMERICAN NEWS
The Japan-American Friendship

Commission awarded its first professional theatre tour grant of \$100,000 to the American Conservatory Theatre. The purpose of the Commission, established by Congress in 1975, are to "aid education and culture at the highest level in order to enhance reciprocal people-to-people understanding and to support the close friendships and mutualities of interest between the United States and Japan." ACT will present two plays from its repertory, *All The Way Home* and *An Old House*, and will play a two-week engagement at the new Sogata Kankin Theatre in downtown Tokyo.

Viola Spolin, creator of the Theatre Game system and author of *Improvization for the Theater and Theatre Games* will conduct an intensive six week summer workshop for actors and theatre professionals. The workshop entitled *Theatre Games — The Key to Improvisation*, will be held at the Sogata Theatre Game Center, 4600 Santa Monica Boulevard, Hollywood, CA 90068, from June 27 to August 4, 1978.

The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and the Michael Schlesinger Workshop, Inc from New York will hold a joint programme of four weeks of intensive study at LAMDA, in London, from July 17 to August 11, 1978. The programme features twenty five hours of classes per week. LAMDA teachers will hold classes in Shakespeare, voice, scene study, movement and stage lighting. Michael Schlesinger, former instructor at the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute, will conduct

classes in "The American Method". The programme will also include guest lectures and visits to the London theatre production.

— Courtesy of the American ITI Newsletter April 1978

NEW PLAYSCRIPTS

The Hungarian Centre of the ITI has been carrying out a very valuable theatrical service for over a year now. It has collected new plays by unknown playwrights from all parts of the world, translated them into English, French and other languages and distributed them to all ITI centres.

The Australian Centre of the ITI now has approximately 600 new scripts translated into English, and those interested in receiving a list of these plays should contact the office.

DANCE INFORMATION NEEDED

The Hungarian Centre of the ITI has also started an information bulletin on dance in various countries and distributed three stages throughout the world. The aim of the Bulletin is to inform our dance community staff, structure, first night, guest performances etc to create an "international flow of dance information".

The editor, G P Davies, Hungary Centre of the ITI, 1977 Budapest, Petofi Sandor Ter 4 would like news from Australian dance companies about current seasons, both past and future for publication in the next issue.

Susan Paterson, ITI Editor

MUSICALS FOR AMATEUR SOCIETIES AND SCHOOLS

J.C. Williamson Theatres Limited holds the amateur rights for many popular musicals, including great shows of the past with music by Leslie Bricusse, Jerome Kern, Victor Herbert and Lionel Monckton. Many of these shows have been a success on the professional stage. Why not have your school or Amateur Musical Society do their own production of one of them? You can choose from many wonderful shows, including the following —

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MAID OF THE MOUNTAINS

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PAINT YOUR WAGON
THE DESERT Song
THE MERRY WIDOW

THE CHOCOLATE SOLDIER
THE FINKLY
THE LILAC DOMINO
VERONIQUE
THE GEISHA

MAIN OF LA MANCHA
THE HEM MOON
OUR MISS GIBBS

KATINKA
GONE UP
VIKTORIA AND HER HUSSAR
A WALTZ DREAM
FLORADORA

For further information contact Mr. J. Bryson, Amateur Rights Department, Comedy Theatre, 240 Exhibition Street, MELBOURNE 3000. Phone 669-5021

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This MTC production is a landmark.

THE BEAUX STRATAGEM

RAYMOND STANLEY

The Beaux Stratagem by George Farquhar
Melbourne Theatre Company, Melbourne Vic. Opened May 1, 1978
Director, Peter Hallinan; set, Tony Trapp; costumes, Kim Carpenter; light, arranged by William Zappa; choreography, Costelloe Martin.

Cast: Don Barker (Ches), Lynette Curting (Fay); John Bowring (Arwell) Murray Denyer (Archer), David Denyer (Dorothy), Betty Goldthorpe (Mrs. Sullen), Jennifer Hagan (Sally), Ian Suddaby (Sir James Hargrave), Gideon Jones (Stanley), Karen Kain (Katy White), Douglas Jonathan Hartin (Cox), Robert Keenan (Conqueror), Betty Webb (Mrs. Lute), Michael Treacy (Freemason), Rosalind Stephen (Mollie), Roger Peter Martin (Sir Charles Fenton), Michael Edgerton (Trevor), Rita Arana (Betty Webb), Peter Martin (Katy Webb).



Margaret-Jane de'Charles Freeman and Jennifer Hagan (left) Sullen in the MTC's *The Beaux Stratagem*. Photo: David Parfitt.

At last the MTC has come up with a classical production about which we can conservatively rave. And the big suggestion is that it is the type of classic heralded for Australians to perform, being the early 18th century *The Beaux' Stratagem*.

Usually considered George Farquhar's best play, *The Beaux' Stratagem* was written in no works in his trademark year. He died not long after its first performance at London's Haymarket in 1707. It is generally conceded that had he lived on he would have been a dramatist of considerable significance, for composing any of his contemporaries.

Strangely, this *The Ferrarese Officer* is better known in that country, and is in fact the first known performed play in Australia — in 1857 by citizens.

The Beaux Stratagem can be considered to contain more autobiographical segments in it, since Farquhar is known to have married a country-woman for her rappaged fortune of some hundred pounds a year, only to discover it was not constant. The two main characters, Archer and Arwell, are on the look-out for rich ladiesmen as well. Also the play ends amicably with a proposed divorce, and there are some grounds for believing that at the time of writing it, Farquhar was proposing to desert his wife.

The part of Mrs Sullen, the rich society woman, married to an uncovert country squire who is only interested in her money, is generally considered one of the best comedy roles in the classics. With the

exception of Mrs Siddons, nearly all the leading actresses of the 18th century played it in 1737, and again in 1755, Dame Edith Evans had an enormous success with the part. I myself saw Kay Hamerford in John Clements' production (in which he played Arwell) which ran for over five hundred performances in 1968, and then again in 1971 was a Birmingham Repertory Company production which had Albert Finney as Archer and, in the role of Arwell, Celia Giorgi (now director of the South Australian Theatre Company). Maggie Smith played the role for Britain's National Theatre Company in 1970.

Knowing how Restoration-type plays require expert playing in style and manner, I approached the production with an excited anticipation tingled with trepidation. In theory one could think of nobody better equipped in Australia for the two major roles than Jennifer Hagan and David Denyer. In retrospect I am full of praise for almost everything about the production, and in particular for Frank Hagen's masterly direction.

The plot of *The Beaux Stratagem* is probably more straight-forward and less cluttered with sub-plots and characters than a great many other 17th and 18th century plays. At the same time, most Australian directors inadvertently would have managed somehow to make it appear confused. In Hagen's case, though, from the very beginning it comes over clean-cut, with every sentence appearing meaningful. Here and there subtle little touches of something 'Frenchy' are intro-

duced, but never grossly expanded as so frequently occurs in MTC productions. Only on the final fight scene is there a tendency to overplay for laughs — and this is probably the fault of William Zappa who arranged the fight.

It is difficult to believe the performances coming from some actors where ability has not tended previously to under-rate. Unquestionably the expression is frequently created that one is watching a company of stolid English actors at work, as exemplified in the recent Chichester production of *The Apple Cart*. Such ensemble playing has not been seen from the MTC since Gutten's production of *All's Well That Ends Well*. Quite obviously the experienced guidance of Hagen is responsible.

Suzanne Hodgman seems to get every ounce out of the role of Sullen, and then some more. Lynne Currie as Cherry also again reveals what strength and sensitivity she is capable of if given the direction. Sally Cobell — at last getting away from her 'little girl' roles — proves with Denyer she is quite able to carry off more mature roles with aplomb; of all the old ladies from *Intercourt* has played at the MTC, none has seemed more realistic or endearing than Mrs Lucy Beauchamp to play it could not have been the model for her one-level despicable Miss Beaumont. Rosalind Hardy has never appeared to display such restraint as Fingard, and as all the more effective; and until seeing Don Barker as Beauchamp, one had always felt him to be a miffle away from the Crawford police

force.

Of the three principals, the role of Archer appears all too easy for David Downer and his cast along with that ingenuous work of his, never making a tick. Mervyn Drury, always a fine actor, seems a shade under par as Amwell, perhaps it's in the end the role itself, but one has certainly seen him to even advantage. Finally we come to Andie MacDowell, whom one would imagine to be the ideal Mrs. Sadies with — like Kay Thompson and Maggie Smith — a measured style and distinctive voice. Maybe one was expecting just a little too much. Miss MacDowell is always good and she's out in whatever she does. But in this particular production her fellow performers are more to her credit, and she does not seem to go much beyond it herself. My personal view is that she knows too much, underplays at times when there should be a modicum rather in complexity and dominate the proceedings. Since one credits Hauser with the other predominances, one must also hold him responsible for the Mrs. Sadies. Just the same, I still cannot think of anyone in the country who could play it better.

Again and again one misses the revision stage, which speeds up the production and helps to make it run so smoothly. And that has, practical art from Tong Teng. The costumes of Kim Carpenter, are thankfully not designed to overshadow the production or cover any sensations, however one finds the use of so many brownes and similar hues somewhat monotonous and at night have been effective to occasionally make use of more bright colours, or else perhaps some pastel shades.

All in all though, this MTC production is a landmark, which is likely to be a touchstone for sometime to come. A play that is almost lost to other States. Perhaps the ABC might be persuaded to record it for posterity.

lapped up a front row deliberately dashed to the carpet by a waiter. The cynicism were justified as however are right.

What cannot be justified, in my sense, is a similar kind of cynicism from performers who aren't all that inspired. They'd be far better off being cynical towards their own material or themselves, preferably before they walk on stage.

WHILE **B**OTH **P**earles **L**a **C**reme and **T**he **B**usby **B**erkley, I can hardly recall one laugh he alone is less one. Admittedly, the audience were moved to laughter a little more frequently at times they were whipped up into applause. A proportion of the laughs were earned giddily and inflated by the normal pouring sufficiency of Peaches Between and behind those spots of appreciation the response was apparently flat. Invariably, Henry Muus, who sets the tone of drama for the two, left compelled to admonish the crowd as typical Saturday nights.

Pearles La Creme has one fine attribute, for sure, as an instrument the words most effectively in glass-blown elsewhere, she turns to woodsmanship and inclusivity, her ownership is when treated to modest champing karissimus extended, it would appear, to cover passion.

Her one area set in one that would render the very most of Ulysses long, all twisted and no reward. No amount of decoupage, plain-coloured lip, leopard skin leering, vertical eye-rolling and innumerable pelvic quivers can camouflage a poverty of fire, however, and emotional sting.

The Busby Berkleys, stilled in Sunday park costumes, appear in a series of soft-focus Flanagan and Allen routines in which they attack a dimension of dance and music, with clown-like faces and puppet-like choreography. Instead of arriving through hard thought and work, the potential comic expressiveness of these

diverse modes, the techniques are merely indulged for themselves and are justified at the same time, because there is little behind the display of pseudo-tortuous, their entertainment ends up at every end shock to the American ear and tickles them purport to satiate, as ginerack as Busby Berkley himself.

As a comedian Henry Muus is more poised than Jewish, he merely trades off the character of Yiddish personae, his humour is more stand-up California. He doesn't really belong to the great tradition of Jewish humour which is incredibly tough, earthy, existential and self-referential, a very real survival tactic for a tribe of survivors. A riffle through a few pages of Leo Rosten's *The Age of Yiddish* would reveal that.

Any humor depends on the allowed apprehension by the audience of the essential incongruity. The instinct of material can be made progressively funny by sheer tuning and human colour to a context of other understandings, as the English comedian Harry Tate demonstrated once and for all. Henry Muus, whose material is no less tested, does not allow the audience to magnify. Maybe he doesn't trust them, which is only another way of saying maybe he doesn't trust himself, damp down, hence the half-sighing half-snacking nervous giggles immediately after every a punch line.

The Scruffed Puppets, who make up the rest of the evening, for all their commedia, for all their bawdy-handed emphasis on the malleability of animal appetites, have a lead song of fire. A lot of their sketches tend to be facile and underdeveloped, yet the puppets themselves are clever inventions, with fully manipulated. One episode, concerning a piled-up lion king, is by far the funniest for the night, and the only one that is at all affecting.



As ginerack as Busby Berkley himself.

TRUE ROMANCES

JULIA HIBBERD

True Romances site Busby Berkley, Last Laugh Theatre, Restaurant and Zoo, Melbourne Victoria March 1971.

With Peaches La Creme, Henry Muus, Noel Busby, Novice Travers, Ali Klassis, Ross Cooper, and the Scruffed Puppets

Regardless of the particular show on at the time, the general atmosphere at The Last Laugh theatre restaurant invariably has an element of audience manipulation. Many of the staff, is a collected flashes, alternate charlatanism and quackism with blarney. It is a highly successful procedure. The audience either acquiesce at lap it up literally — the night I was there a patron



Must be played more as comedy than classic

THE MISANTHROPE

By C. S. WATKINS

The Misanthrope by Molière, translated by Tony Hartman. At the Drama Company Drama Theatre Sydney. 40s. Opened 26 April 1977. Directed Ted Creasy; Design Anne Prentiss.

Alceste: Barry Otto; Cleante: Ranta Pimpinella; Oronte: Jim Dwyer; Philinte: Raymond Depace; Elmire: Judy Parry; Asterix: Judy Munro; Ascanio: Trevor Huddleston; Russell Bedford; Servantes: Graham Ratcliffe; Doctor: Peter Rowley; Gouffre: Ben Rothloff.

Tony Hartman had what constitutes in the finished product as one of those spontaneously brilliant ideas in translating and interpreting Molière's comedy *The Misanthrope*. The original play is a work of genius satirising seventeenth century society, its prejudices and affectations, with a repartee like but dully barbed wit, but it is hard today to extract a fresh theatrical sharpness from the acidic chiding couplings. Tony Hartman has kept the raw form, but updated it in most of the affects — in *Le Guignol à Paris* — which, far from dulling the edge, keeps the thrust and parry going at speed.

A precise social setting is essential to both the form and content of *The Misanthrope* (indeed in this type of comedy). Alceste must be able to rebel against a particular situation, and the Paris of the '60s is a most appropriate environment in which to place a Dickensian day Alceste. The French existentialist movement had at that time reached its popular apex and was just beginning to find itself countered by a wave of the gentle philosophy of the new humanism and Alceste's rigorous social principles which prove to be impractical in terms of real life, are rendered apparent by the emotions of which he would-be ladies operate taken into account. In general terms the French social net has doubtless changed very little from then to now, with women giving over to exaggerated social pretensions and dramatic interests in the arts (the ageing Molière may not be their best bet as a resource in Australian circles, but just as a grisly idea, an excellent metaphor, perhaps, for dramatic theatricals.)

Although the Old Tote production was smooth at the extreme, it somehow conveyed an effect of displacement, of location, situation and character. The set,



Ronald Dwyer, Raymond Depace and Judy Parry (Elmire) in *The Old Tote's Misanthrope*. Photo: Robert McFarlane

though suggesting rustic opulence, appeared, because of the trap door-like staircase, to be an office room in which was surprisingly located a bar and rather uncomfortable looking sets. (With the narrow gap between sofa and coffee-table, and all the stairs to be negotiated, the actors' agility must be applauded.) The implied rather Odyssean's sales, not a room to and from which people would normally drift from a large party elsewhere.

The disproportionately writing also had the effect of making Harry Otto's Alceste, who is almost constantly on stage, look gaunt at home in this perhaps eccentric room, whereas Oronte's wandering in and out could well have been the discomfited states.

Oronte's Alceste was a thoroughly likable chap and quite understanding in his cooperation with Kate Pimpinella's Cleante, but his expressions of rage were to lacking in ferocity and volatility that Raymond Depace and Judy Parry the two maid-servants, had little scope for emotion.

Through Cleante in her letters to Alceste we just see more extreme in a society of extremes, he is not put in the role of the outsider rebuffed and pilloried, as in classical comedy and Molière's other work. He retains his great integrity and that gets him close to others who do not and won't, those who do have it but compromise, so why don't in continue to love Cleante? This production leaves the question unanswered, for Kate Pimpinella's Cleante is not only of power. The intelligence and wit that keeps her alive finally in control of her followers does not travel through the bars into the person-

ship. As the recipient of the contempt feelings of most of the characters, she unfortunately leaves a gaping hole at the centre of the play.

Although it is part of the "classics" system, and *The Misanthrope* is a classic comedy, it must be played more as a comedy than drama. At the Tote it loses power by apparently being treated with too much earnestness. Tony Hartman's text is fun and funny. It would be audience and audience to compare this one to the London production with Alan McCowan and Diana Rigg, except to say that there the audience laughed at every other line (which especially because they were spoken in flagrant mockery, often in self-mockery, while the Drama Theater audience listened in hushed silence, and that I for preferred Judy Munro's more subtle and slyly Asterix.

Keeping prejudices intact.

JOURNEY'S END ROMEO AND JULIET

CRAIG C. ULRICH

Journey's End by R. C. Sherriff. Maria Stavenhagen, Julian, 1977. Directed 14 April 1977. Director: Alastair Outterside; Design: Michael O'Kane.

Hasty Tom: Michael Kirby; Osborne: Jim Dwyer; Mervyn: John Lakings; Ralph: Dennis Parker; Stanhope: Tim Hughes; Lester: Curt Jansen; Hobson: Ruth Howard; Clegg: Ben Heckett; Lovell: Vincent Boland; German Soldier: Terry Peck.

Journey's End, written just ten years after the Armistice, in 1928, has a little something for everyone. And perhaps not quite enough for anyone. As war plays go it is fairly free from fake heroism, yet for those who still see the world in terms of the English as top dog it does not lack a certain cynicism and complacency. It says that everyone in khaki was not a hero, yet it enhances honour and makes the regimental reward object, excess and ridiculous. It honours that the trenches were more frightened animal, but on the other hand puts needed firm treatment like the barrel of a gun pressed to the temple to snap them out of it.

Journey's End depicts the wasted lives of war, but takes the fact of war as given. It expresses a sort of mild disillusionment, while dispensing reassurance. Maybe that is why the author, caught so often acting on the inside, can only go for irony in his dramatic reviews. There are some minor successes and the odd moment of reality, but no depth or consistency from the play's physical focus is a paradox. It has a front-line setting, yet for the greater part of the evening the war is a mere backdrop. And, although talk prevents our action, the dialogue hardly begins to tap the sort of serious concern one might have expected from the literary status of the late Rattigan, in the wake of such war masters as Edmund Blunden, Siegfried Sassoon, and Robert Graves.

The author E C Shariff had begun to write a novel on the theme of hero worship between two schoolboys, Stanhope and Raleigh. Later this was scrapped and Raleigh became a new class officer at a British dug out. Finally Stanhope is the inferior senior officer, a former school captain when Raleigh was in primary school, engaged to Raleigh's sister. But Stanhope is drinking himself into a stupor. He finds the presence of Raleigh an embarrassment, fearful of what he might write home and so on.

If Shariff had paralleled the blood-burying school days with the idle culture of war, dramatized the giving and taking of stupid and dangerous orders, maybe analysed the substitution of one set of authority figures for another, translated, as it were, the playing fields of Eton to Platitudes Fields or even written a play about the effects of a great disillusionment as Raleigh. *Journey's End* might have become a classic, of sorts. But little of that emerges. Stanhope's remembrance of the young man is based on fear of discovery, and he lacks the courage to support even that notion. Raleigh should see through Stanhope at once — he seems a raving madman from the start. There's a nasty scene where Stanhope demands to see Raleigh's letters home on the grounds (quite spurious and normally unfounded) that all mail must be censored, and an amazing sequence of the D/F which is not public but hardly private either and unlikely to inspire confidence. And that's in the first half. Yet later in the play Stanhope looks on in Tom Hargreaves' performance, healthy and capable at all times, despite the occasional rages) in the man of action, stage managing an absurd farce behind German lines through the

author doesn't and has personally), carrying out orders yet protesting at loss of life. Stanhope is "loyal" above all to his men and chats with the higher-ups in a more or less disengaging fashion. The play accepts the vision of the high command as something to be looked to and obeyed, albeit with regret. Moreover he is able to demonstrate local discipline by "pacifying" a malcontents-free platoon otherwise disturbed.

In this sense Stanhope points a gun at the head of the unfortunate man, and, when the latter doesn't agree to stay and fight long because death is preferable, congratulates his subordinates on his injured courage (this could have been ironic, but nothing seems intended). Then, after reducing Hobart to a more tractable kind of nervous wreck, he explains in a kindly manner that he too is afraid.

As the evening progresses one wonders if Stanhope is meant to be admired, is it the war or is he just a dangerous credit? When "Uncle" Oberon, an older officer, Stanhope's friend, confidant and "nanny" (he looks him up at times of great paedophilia) is sent with Raleigh on the top-below enemy lines and is killed, the grieving Stanhope behaves like a pig to Raleigh. Yet it was not the grizzled commander but the unfortunate junior who had to task a German soldier under his nose and drag him back to the English lines (an image not entirely lost from memory).

No, Raleigh is only to get sympathy from his hero when a shell blows him in half. Sensational, if measured, annotations even this scene is still the best in the play, and quite moving. Manipulation of the two chaps may have no necessary connection with art, or even a good play but Shariff has done well here, against the odds he has at himself.

In another good bit the Germans are acknowledged as decent — they allowed

two of "the boys" to carry a wounded man back to camp, and in turn on their way. Although this is only mild and not very immediate, it is perfectly acceptable that compare how much better something similar is done in *Ot What a Lovely War!*. There you may recall, the Germans and the English were united on Christmas Day by the former's singing of "Silent Night", a temporary truce was declared, and presents (and post) were exchanged. And there of course were the vague similarity ends — *Ot What a Lovely War!* pictures the English high command, express incompetence, corruption and the vacuity of the war managers, rather over-waxed love. Little of this appears on the present world of *Journey's End* nor for the most part, do the shells and mortar. Until the end, that is, when some of the big bats fly down. There is even atmosphere of combat in *Ot What a Lovely War!* (which is, after all, a song and does reveal that to all that fiery "battlefat" drama).

At Kilian the cast look too neat throughout to suggest contact with the sadder aspects of trench life (like rats, or scoping water). And since Stanhope and Raleigh are almost inseparable — Tom Hargreaves and Darren Parker are only slightly interestingly the former an unconvincing drunk, the latter largely confined to gauged "sorries" and general embarrasement.

Elsewhere things are better. Although Adrian Dornan's production rarely develops the relationships beyond the first hours of the text, it is careful and well-paced, and not without a certain atmosphere. Nothing drags too much and there's a good acting from Lee Jannin (a worn barnet Oxford), Carl James and Tom McCrory (answering as officers) and John Larking (both cook and bottle washer). Indeed *Journey's End* is not really boring and sometimes entertaining. Why then do I feel so unimpressed?



Tom Hargreaves as Stanhope in *Journey's End* at the Old Vic

Well in the first place, to be deemed worthy of survival, shouldn't our play have something to tell us, shouldn't our main concern be to put a bit? Isn't war too important to be represented on stage by well-made plays? Aren't theatre audiences aware enough to be bored by cherry dried? Probably not. With Jowsey's *End* a substantial audience congregates still on the enlightened discovery that war is a beauty after, and at the same time retain its prejudices intact. Few conservative values are known to have opposed Vietnam, and if the Federal Government re-introduced conscription tomorrow, I doubt anyone would take to the streets of Kilburn. Jowsey's *End* notwithstanding.

Why is the set for the Actor's Company *Errors* and *Judas* framed in grey-green rails? Is the play taking place in a forest, or a swamp? Why not the women fully clothed and the men in various states of undress. Romeo for instance appears in a Jungle Boy setting. Mercutio looks dishevelled as a tame French Lieutenant or vagabond in printed robes, with a bandana and gold chain at more formal occasions. It's no use asking why the character didn't represent the weird excesses of the setting because apart from Kate Ferguson (Duke) and John Parascos (Mercutio) there isn't any. Nor can any rationalistic cuts — he's done that already (I won't complain!) Still we might legitimately ask why Romeo and Juliet couldn't have been left in peace on the library shelf, where school children may get some idea of what it's about. In the production, when the play ends, it's not only the losers that are laid out cold.



Melvin Davis, Margot, Michael Leahy
Courtesy of Robert McElroy

Margot and John McElroy, Michael Leahy
Photo Robert McElroy

Since they in address themselves to addressing and fairly recent examples of various productions they would discover almost to the point of consistency how often the play has been plundered for its entertainment potential. It has spawned an opera, the American Musical *The Boys From Syracuse* and even in the faltered balls of the Royal Shakespeare Company has had one song interpreted through its text winning for Shakespeare several "best musical" awards in 1976 (John Bell, then, crew ball in the line of fire with such other theatrical lightweights as Karamazov, Clifford Williams and Trevor Nunn).

Theatrical precedent alone cannot defend Bell from the argument that he should have ignored or transcended such illustrious peers. Belmont finally stands or falls in relation to the best itself. Here I believe he should not only be emulated, but excelled, and not merely for the manner in which his erstwhile business for actors cuts like a sharpening scythe through the dense undergrowth of allusions, references and puns — for that is a matter of opinion — but more especially the confluence of the style of that production with that implied by the text.

Perhaps our two critical commentaries might have addressed themselves to the way the play itself flows from the merging of two strains, the romantic and classical comedy. And the former is to a great extent breached by the latter in this play. That when one of those "natives" down" after Henry Snags' moving speech to the father in search of a lost family and sentenced to death for being found on alien territory "in the confined expectation that the play would be robust as well as entertaining", something is expected that the play itself cannot provide.

For the play shifts from its romantic beginnings (in any case largely a cleverly assembled prequel to the classical standpoint of its norms). And classical comedy had no place for such bad men.

True to the whims and quirks of power, but was a brilliant farce dependent on the very knockabout, crude and ready humour which these critics dismiss as in this production. Even Larry Eastwood's gaudy sharpie set, to my mind, has a powerful impact, far removed by definition requires numerous doses, to strip them out a carnival mirror both the isolated plots of the central scenes and their whistling reviled successor. The fairground effect contains within it the painted magic and treachery pleasure seeking of the Ephesus setting (looked upon as a kind of *Cave of the Day*).

If the action often look like puppets it is because their strings are not being purely tugged by tragedy human plots of later, more refined Shakespearean comedy, but jangled by the mechanical complication of a classically Roman foul. Indeed Bergonzi, the great theoretician of the comic, disputes the possibility of the human tragedy the critics see as wanting. "Laughter has no greater energy than emotion" — certainly must not move me" — and goes to the point: "attitudes, pictures of the human body are meant to satisfy the same propensities as the body itself; that of a simple machine".

The mechanisation arises from Shakespeare's ranging all the permutations possible from placing two sets of twins, the Antipholuses and their servant Dromio, antecedent to each other, in the same play at the same time. The one close to Ephesus is played as a gentle man by Tony Sheldon, only slowly realising his vulnerability to the sweet threat which hangs over his father, and with increasing fear for the Captain's terrible reception he receives.

Were it a "dark" comedy the belief he comes to that Ephesus is a place of "Dark working" "secretive" and "Soul-telling whilst" could be placed for profound significance, here still with a kind of topicality the Elizabethans would have

Not just exonerated but extolled.

COMEDY OF ERRORS

BRUCE LIPMAN

Comedy of Errors, by William Shakespeare, directed by Thomas Sophie, with opening 1 April 1978. Starring John Bell, Robert McElroy, Lynne Edwards, Lynette, Vicki Patterson, Lynette, David Reed, Sue Weston, Margaret Wright.
Mr. Duke: Oliver Roberts; Leon, Egeus: Michael Hayes; Pompey: Alan Morris; Metaphor: Keith; Autophiles: Tony Micallef; Dromio: John McElroy; Dromio: Bruce Parry; Admetus: Maggie Davies; Lucretia: Elizabeth Lamont; Mrs. Admetus: Maggie Davies; Angelo: Vicki Patterson; Robert Bell; Dr. Faustus: Michael Bennett; Leonora: Anne Velasco.

When a theatre company reaches a certain stage of maturity and accomplishment there is a tendency especially among the more senior of critics, to denounce their progress by looking with contempt, disdain and even scorn upon their offerings. Otherwise how can one explain the response of two of our major critics (in *The Australian* and *The Advertiser*) to *Comedy Of Errors*?

applauded, arms his actors with laser beams straight out of Star Wars. Or again, were it a romantic comedy, this *Antiphon* gamely tried right after being head over heels for Lucretia, actually his sister-in-law, could not be cast by the ingenious defining move of a painted doll (Elizabeth Luccardi).

In classical mode there is much ado about the sexual drama, but little on the cause of the love. Adriana, wife of the local man-about-town *Antiphon* (Matthew Ricketts), must not be allowed to willoe in "the heat and jealousy behind their preachment". Quite the opposite, she is a virgin who has chosen her husband from her class — at her mother-in-law's insistence! She may be more fully realized than the classical shrew, but is only catching the remnant, contrary consciousness when she asks, "Why should a man's liberty then care me more?"

Star should Anna Volodia's breezily seductive playing of the Courtesan be divided by social comment? That she has no excuse for her carnalery attitude and the "services" she provides for the males of the community is possibly more acceptable to our own times and certainly to the Romans than to the romantic Elizabethans, who at least publicly stood for fidelity in marriage.

The Division too are the stereotyped clowns of classical comedy, save when the pants-clown comic (Maggie Blund) needn't bring me to a dramatic root: Both suffer the (moral) humiliations dispensed by their masters, though both serve too as confidants. Again Ricketts (and, respectively, such irreproachable Elizabethan clowns as Tarlton) and Kampe supports the use of underdeveloping tricks in the service of that comedy; the "accomplishment" of John McFerran and Drew Forsyth in that regard, then, can hardly be made the basis for pejorative comment. Such a right is neither trend nor a "deviation of Shakespeare"; either it is a cutting away of false posturing and root back to something much closer to what that playwright's stage practised.

If the production has faults, and no one would claim it perfect, to my mind they are more the faults of trying to construct movements to the endings of the episodes, or in the use of actions for the *Antiphon*s who are too distinctive in looks and manner — though of course to have them indifferently identical would defeat the play.

This production, as clearly suggested by the longish title, shows that directorial imagination has come a long way since Ray Lawler's *Sleuth*. Some might want it to remain the taking up of antecedents (actually a brief abstraction when dramatic history is taken as a whole); it saddens that any critic can long for the "reality of (the) first scene". But no, for those were the same what applauded an actually less rhythmically deliberate bag of tricks for *Much Ado*.

William Arthur once wrote "What one requires in the theatre is, to be spoken a certain proportion of plausible unreasons to the square inch, or rather, to the corner". John Bell's greater stand, in my view, on the ability to provide just that

1 + 2 HENRY IV BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

TOMMY BRIGHT

King Henry the Fourth Ronald Pali, Sir John Falstaff Kevin Miller, Bedeviled Earl of Shropshire Leslie Chapman, Honourable Quinny Daphne Gray, Dr. Nathan Petrie, Lieutenant Northumberland Leslie Mathews, Bishop Berwickshire Dennis Jones, Silence Gerry Flynn, Worcester, Patrick Friend, Prince Hal Michael Siberry, Worcester, Bullish Doctor Pauline Smith, Prince, Celia Princeton Gosselin, Sir Richard Vernon, Maudly, Mel Gibbons, Fred Fright, Prince John of Lancaster Michael Pali, Sir Mordred Brian Horrocks, Brother Wayne, Juana, Lady Percy, Queen Michelle, Lady-in-Waiting, White Lady, Gurney, Towler, Whore, Charlie Mackesy, Prince, Shakes, Tom Parker, Curio, Prince Humphrey of Gloucester, Master Bohemian, Towler, King John, Pocock, Lancelot, Prince Clarence, Master Pocock, Adapted and Directed by Colin George, Set Design and Costume Designed by Hugh Edwards, Lighting Designed by Nigel Lovett

Colin George became the latest in the long and apparently winding line of directors who have taken liberties with Shakespeare for his latest production with the South Australian Theatre Company.

1 + 2 Henry IV presents an one 200 minute performance as a synthesis of the two parts of Henry IV (with a bit of Richard II and Henry V). Mr. George's aim, stated in the programme notes, was for an entertainment which outlined the education of a prince, explores his relationship with his father and ultimately in the rejection of his father in *Henry IV*.

In reality, anyone who follows with Shakespeare opens himself to criticism. What is left out? For a start in this production Glendower doesn't get a look in and Hotspur dies off-stage and there is more to share the queen. What is left in? Essentially, as Mr. George puts it, the scenes between Hal and Falstaff and Hal and the king, the contrast between the worlds of the court and the town.

But the real question must be does it succeed? This critic's response would be an only slightly qualified yes.

For much of its length it is a dark, almost sombre play. The principal characters at least these above the rest, wear long military-style cloaks. The stage is mainly open with wooden platforms and objects such as a chair, bed and benchwood moved freely in and out.

Only in the last scene, which has the crowned Henry V gorgeously clad in a long robe adorned with heraldic devices triumphantly on a platform high above the stage is there pure pageantry, and all the more effective by what has gone before and pointing to the future triumphs of a wasted nation.

Mr. George's reworking of the play highlights their political aspect less obviously whether he was influenced by the Royal Shakespeare Company's presentation of the full cycle at Stratford a decade or more ago. Hal makes completely understandable Hal's rejection of the king but it is not only necessity politica, it is elementary common sense.

A dramatic touch at the play moved towards this theme was the brief scene between the bachelors, Benvolio, Quinny and Doll Teasdale in which George who had the shortest showing the marks of a savage whipping, a real reminder of the cruelty of the times. Another nice touch was that after the curtain falls the king breaks down on an Adelaide stage for a considerable time while the characters file out with much pomp, save Falstaff. He dressed like a general in the doublet Sergeant Pepper army, blew the audience a big kiss.

In all there's a reading of the WHI which avoided sentiment, moralized thought and which worked dramatically.

The cast, many of whom played double, and some triple, roles acted extremely well together. Invariably attention was focussed on Pocock Hal and the king. Steven Miles Pocock was the best thing he has done in Adelaide. Pedestal to traditional style and, unfortunately, wearing trousers, pullover and boots for the early scenes, he was witty and vigorous, blustering and polly. If he lived alone all the parts of the character ("We have heard the eloquence in daylight, Master Shallow by night") he would rule the comedy.

Michael Siberry made a painful but completely credible Prince Hal. He has a clear voice and projected a character who was realistic from the outset to be marked for leadership and ruthlessness, a man who only differs with difference. There was something cold about him, a man who never really found himself, still less his position. Mr. Siberry's first Shakespearean lead, it was an impressive performance.

Ronald Pali's interpretation of the old king was equally impressive, a very good actor, in easy control of the poetry a rare concession of his approaching death and still tormented by his usurpation of Richard.

Special mention is due too, of Daphne Gray's Mistress Quinny, Petrie Keenleys, Doll Teasdale and Leslie Chapman's Shakes, a trio of rich gourmets and of Michael Pali who, in one of his three parts, gave the audience a delectably camp Peeble.

Malfuctions in the communications panel.

GENTS

BY MICHAEL MORLEY

Crew: by Keith Gilmour; Director of the Red Mud Adelphi '94; Opened May 4, 1994
Upright: Keith Gilmour; Design: Michael Gilmour; Lighting: Pauline Chisholm; Costume: Paula Carter.
Characters: Michael Lester, Robert Rose, Hessey, Robert McFadyean, Mark Mappbridge; The rock Alice Laps.

Over the last year, several of Troup's productions had been concerned with questioning and debating the patterns and presuppositions of Australian society, taking as a particular target the man and his view of himself. Their latest production *Gents* spills out its subject in the title and to do so from the point of view — one presumes artfully — on a lengthy exchange which estimates at intermittently laugh and with no great subtlety what purports to be the ideological implications of experiences in men's latrines (basically close encounters of the other-kind?). The relevance of the dialogue escaped me. "Urinal I have known" may well be a topic that calls forth an appropriate (?) response (?) in others more versed than I in the ways of the Wallaby and his Walkie. But it all came out sounding rather like an older equivalent of the only marginally more instructive observations of Desmond Morris in his man-watching meanderings.

When the sort of pseudo-scientific dialogue takes place on a computer-operated cargo-space ship floating in the near future between earth and God-dimension, according to the play-homewhore, one can be pardoned for thinking that whatever the author may be working to say, some of the audience will be floating light years behind him. And one's reservations were hardly allayed when the four characters in their floating futuristic robes advanced up the stairs in each of the four corners of the auditorium and started moments of foot splashing with such a bluster that at least two members of the audience smirched their feet. At this stage I began to fear that the next step would be a lengthy discussion — demonstration of masturbation incense fraction perhaps? Luckily such fears were assuaged.

I have nothing but admiration for Troup's keenness and the way it has cut about interrogating Adelphi theory. But on all counts *Gents* is an unhappy piece of work — the more so since that the first play the company will be throwing outside South Australia. The single greatest merit is casting the play in a soft context: the world of computer, galaxies, rasterizing pretension, star-bursts and the like is totally at odds with the language and attitudes of the all too recognisably On

males, none of whom is more than an over-feminine stereotypical. There is the intellectual (Michael Lester), the sports geek (Bob Hessey), the dimwitted-depressive-motivated visiter (John McFadyean), the youth with a latent libido and few inhibitions (Mark Mappbridge). The conversations between them could equally well have taken place in a waiting room of a railway station or doctor's surgery (ten years ago they still did). And all the half-disgusted borrowings from *Sixties* 2000 (unacknowledged) and *Love, Le Guin and Calico* (paraded as the programme notes as if to authenticate their progeny) are evidently aimed and point, serving at once to distract the gaze from the work's essential emptiness and as the same time to lend it an air of unfettered authority which is demonstrably spurious.

The play is no mere "dilettante symbolic" (as the author's programme notes assure us) than an episode of *Dr Who* and if anything, considerably less interesting. The language is mostly unconvincing and affectless, and only at moments do the characters speak as if individualised (so to speak). The tenor of the speech is often so uniform, so undifferentiated that many could be re-allocated without anyone being the wiser. It is not enough to have one character use odd locker-room images to mark him off as different, or make another almost nod, surely when he's told he uses words (language in drama should not merely reflect the author's reading and/or attitudes, it should at some stage express an actor's attitudes, the way of life), as attempts to have up to as used his personality. In this play it often sounds as if whole stretches of dialogue had been written by a computer, the depersonalised sexual phony dots the air and dominate the atmosphere. And when this is linked with strength of significance that encompass the cocaine, uriniferous, "feeling, waste and rotation" (programme note) and Keith French on general paternalistic motifs, one can surely be excused for thinking little "street anthropological content" (author's note); but rather too many "malfuctions in the communications panel" (author's note).

Mostly the quartet coped well with the problem of developing an ensemble style in the use of speech which related each character behind barriers of metaphor and clusters of self-analysis. Ken Hessey was notably intelligent in the "Rugby, Racing and Bon" role, and John McFadyean threw himself energetically into the role of the importunate freak, living unemployed and given to rather curious outbursts of frosty and callidum. Michael Lester and Mark Mappbridge had the two more thankless roles and managed at times, almost to convey one of the appropriateness of the jargon and metaphors. At one moment — the latter's long speech about his experiences as a postman — the actor hit a note of music comedy which rang true and was totally absent from the rest of the work. It would have been to the play and the actors' benefit if the author had taken both his secondary repertoire and his primal myths a little less seriously.



DOUBLING UP

CLIFF GRILLO

Spicing Up! As the Hole in the Wall Theatre Production '94. Opened April 26. Directed by John Hibberd. Design by James Hibberd. Sets: Michael Gilmour, Eddie Murphy, with Lee Harvey. Stage: Jack Hibberd. Lighting: Lee Harvey. Music: Eddie Murphy, Ned Kelly, Paul Wilkshire, Maggie Dence, Wayne Oldfield, Murray Cummings, Mark Hanmer, Brian Lewis, Peter Cook, Gerald Whiting, Jim Evans, Alan Fletcher, Lee Harvey, Dennis Johnson, and The Big Murphy. Show by Alexander Black. With Lee Murphy, Alan Fletcher, Chris Wallace, Paul Wilkshire, Mark Connolly, Mr. Whiting, Sarah T. Lee, Gerald Fletcher; Simon Morris Cummings, Brian De Laat, Armstrong, Darren Lee; Charles Daniel, Dennis Johnson, Col. David McLean.

There's a kind of double-meaning in the Hole's title for its May season of two one-actors about Australian sport. There's the immediate application of course to the plays themselves, Hibberd's *Lee Harvey Show* and Black's *The Big Murphy Show*, but there's also the fact that this is the second time around for this particular double-bill at the Hole, a fact which leads one to suspect that the success of the initial season, in 1974, has prompted the Hole management to review it in order to give themselves a sporting chance in the balance sheet.

It should certainly do that, the two plays combining well to make up a thoroughly enjoyable Odysseus's night out at the theatre. First up is Hibberd's *Lee Harvey Show*. This is of Hibberd's forte in the world of the "mythic" Odysseus, of which the second is *A Team to Melba*. The *Lee Harvey Show* uses the techniques of vaudeville and music hall to relate in a brief, if does-dramatic kind of way, the story of the man and (of) the Mastodon Tyrant. Lee is portrayed and played very well by Paul Coloway as the kind of wide-eyed, good-humoured personified of someone powers in this case juggling, but the particular kind of criminal as long as they're sporting who has become the type of the Australian champion athlete. He loves the man, but lives up to the ideals of his boozey Irish Dad. He is egulated by overzealous fans, bad promoters and kindly dooms, spontaneously struck down by disease at his prime while chasing pots of world championship gold in Yugoslavia. As a short-hand popular history, Hibberd's play is not half bad; as an entertainment it's even better, the every instant at a

cracking pace, with lots of soap, drama, jokes and even room for the odd come-on rate, much as Gerald Hitchcock's Irish period.

While a lot of the fun of Les Darcy is undeniably (and unashamedly) derived from the nostalgic element in the play, the audience laughing comfortably at the stage of earlier Australian in much the same way that one might over surreal exercises preserved in ten-year-old snapshots of oneself. *Ron's Big Murphy Show* brings us (longing up to date) with some pretty sharp satire comedy at the expense of that institution of weekend TV, the post-mortem's panel of footy experts. The odds in Rugby League, but the punters in each show all play the same game, whether talking about League or Aussie Rules, and Ron has their measure.

Part-taking Roy, the panel chairman, grows with his regulars, the up-to-date jargon and the old-time footy lingo, and with his partner, a coach and the player off the mark, is like the critics with meander everywhere, including between the ears, while juggling critical "jibes" (conversations) (obliging commercial break) with his mistress, his wife and his father-in-law, who happens to own the station. A right little blonde with legs off the way up collects him keeping turning up to do it, and all in all, a good time is had by all, especially the audience. If Baile's plan is a little too far-fetched and his ending merely silly, the bulk of the show is mapping good satire. The cast is like some of her Les Garry of course, and its interesting to see Alan Fletcher come from lots of little bits in Les to a strong central role as Roy Murphy as it is to see Moyra Carnegie move from her strong performance as Les's Catholic Mum to something completely different, but equally as strong as Marion, the girl with the grottoes.

This company will be touring WA's country towns with this double bill in June. It is an ideal show to take to the country, where our mothers are longer, and Les Darcy more perhaps than just a name, where the big city sports show-but-stilltyrilliness in *Roy Murphy* is remembered familiar via country radio, and where live theatre is not often experienced, and when it is, is mostly coloured by the friend-and-relative of the local Dramatic Society members gently pointing away at productions of romantic comedies and feathered girls of which are neither funny, nor thrilling. Sporting Double may help to soften live theatre out in the back blocks. I'm willing to take a punt of says "You're Mackin' baile."

I don't know whether this answer and tour was planned before Dianne Nilsson's recent unfortunate car accident, but if it was, "California", as the footy commentators are in the habit of saying, since Nilsson was probably never able to cope with a reversal than something new while propelling himself about on crockers. I didn't see the original production, as the late lamented Norman would say, O.S., but I'm reliably informed by some that did that the current production is a fairly faithful facsimile. And why not? when you're on a good thing

GREENROOM G's AND GAUCHERIES Getcha Gum and Gee Gaucheries (of the third kind)

CLIFF CHILAN

Cast by Barry Keefe, Greenroom Production Perth WA Updated April 4 1979
Directed by Andrew Ross Stage Manager
Mike Donohue Lighting Design Ross Russell
Set and Stage Painterships Ivan Leigh
Taylor, Tom Bassett Lee, MacKenzie
Ivan King.

Comments by Howard Brester, Director
of Stage and above Web Get Gummo
Gum, Ross Michael Bulloch and Rossie
Gee.

Castaways of the Third Army New Hopkins Theatre Perth WA Opened April 19 Triple Bill with *Les Darcy* by Jean Claude van Helsing Directed by Stephen Armes with Rosalie Roger Bellamy; *Dave* (Linda Casas); *Dave II* (Marcella Horwitz, Lady of the Lake); *Lessee, Herfherfhering*, *Soldier* by Edward Albee Directed by Linda Macdonald with Marion Beverly Morris; *Daddy* (Mrs. Bannister); *Gummo* Linda Macdonald, *Young Man Doug* Peter Robertson, *Mosman James* Brian Escombe by Kenneth Tynan Directed by Ross Edwards with *Audrey Flippin* Vicki Keith Robinson; *Miss Fleas* Barbara Marjorie Bowditch Nichols designed by Michael von Schaefer. For the whole production Stage Management by Gavan Gibney, Lighting Design by Robin MacKenzie.



Two contemporary plays about education. That bit preambles described the Greenroom's April double bill. Howard Brester's *Gum and Gee* however turned out to be less about education than for it in two senses. Written for a teachers conference in England in 1969, it is also an education of the broadest kind, urging, through an expressive technique for a greater understanding of the world of the other. The otherworld in this case is that of a disturbed child, a young girl played remarkably well in the Greenroom production by Louise Griffiths, and it is established with the aid of two comic book and

football-addicted boys who are also, variously, a mother and father, a "dirty old man" and a policeman, and Gum and Gee, two bawling figures of tender van captured by the imagination of the girl/bank.

The world of the Freaks, an inner world of emotional violence and miscommunicating, an noisy world of lust and danger (into death as the abiding plot of the play eventually has it) is built up by a seeming interlacing of fantasy sequences with scenes of quasi naturalism — a structural gambit demanding both flexibility and discipline on the part of the two male actors as the three (Mother, Rose Cole and Richard Taibach) rise to the challenge. All three players are part of the Playhouse's Theatre-in-Education programme, of which Andrew Ross is overall Director. I don't know whether *Gum and Gee* has been played in the schools but I hope that it has or will be, cause it seems an excellent piece for school-age audiences, and certainly both male truly theatrical and likely to open the minds of lots that the play with which it was paired, Barry Keefe's *Gummo*.

This play was indeed about education, playwright Keefe having continued the most juvenile with a situation which enables him to thumb a large rub about the horrors of mass education. Linda Taylor and Steven Lee play two fairly typical (an overenthusiastic) high school teachers, an English teacher and a Physical Education master respectively, who are "gen" — trapped in a school atmosphere with a callousness schoolsby who threatens to blow all three to kingdom come by the simple expedient of dropping a lighted cigarette into the fuel tank of a motorcycle. (If you want to know what a motorcycle is doing in a school classroom in the first place, I refer you back to the sorts post continuous ones, at the beginning of this paragraph.) The schoolboy in understandable panic about being passed out of the school as a non entity in order to enter a working life of more of the same. He blames (no pun for passing) the system, an incarnated in the masters, of whom (predictably) the English master proves compassionate if nihilistic, and the male Physical Education old and oftenly frustrated in his "Life wasn't meant to be easy" comprehension of and acceptance to the boy's working-class horizons. The Headmaster, played by Ivan King, is arrogant and thwarts his still members' understandable incarceration, as told a few home truths and is (predictably) shown to have for all his administration's inconsistencies of manner and acceptance a psychological, a mind similarly closed to the real paths of the abashed boy's heart to wisdom.

Keefe's no Spielberg, and after ten minutes one realises that the boy's repeated fidgets, apparent in hand, to the motorcycle tank are mere gestures. No-one's going to get blown up, but we are in for a good thirty minutes more in depth exploration of characters about as deep as a Rita paper seen sideways on. The actors, all-season professionals for the boy, do a very good job considering the clichés they've been saddled with by the

playwright, in customizing the direction that these people are more than parts in Keith's little piece of 'how terrible it all is' - socially concerned satire... I had thought the vagas for this stuff good but it seems like the aforementioned verb, to be also contained. All very craftsmanlike, but boring theatre. Gavola would perhaps make a good script for a television play aimed at the "serious, socially concerned" viewer. Director Ross had the whole thing well paced, and drew a particularly fine performance as the boy from Seven Dwarfs from a novice performer only recently graduated from W.A.I.T.'s Theatre Arts course.

April seems to have been Perth's month for anumber of one-acters brought to you by the letter 'G', once we also had a short season of three plays gathered together under the general title of *Glaeserfest* (of the third kind presented by U.D.S. at the New Douglas Theatre). We had a piece by Albee, *The Sandbox*, in which Edward once again shadow boxes with the American Queen, railing the play with the old standbys of his vision, powerful women, plastic variety and *The Horror of Death*. This featured an excellent performance in the main role of Oney by the director, Linda McNaull. We had a tedious piece of vintage Van Ballou, with Jean Claude doing a sort of Albee *Assassin in Paris*. A good example that, of how the conventions of the Albee-like most theatrical comedians, prove incapable to the corruption of an essentially soap-operatic vision. There were however, a couple of strong performances, particularly that of Linda Goss as Doris H.

So far then, pretty standard amateur theater fare if you will allow. So why am I rating *Glaeserfest*?

Because we also had a much more contemporary piece of the thought of the Albee, called *Aleksander*, by Ronald Tavel. This was directed by Karl Zandy, who has made his mark as an actor with a particular gift for camp and off-beat roles (he did a little part in a *Lesbian* last year) and was a remarkably comic Satan or Mephisto-Evil in the Festival Whigfield (sp?) It seems that he has carried over that gift into the directorial realm, for *Aleksander* sparkled with the joyous garrulous entrepreneurial humour and down-right Hindu shambolicness that can make the less kind of Albee theatre a truly liberating experience. From two of the most experienced local spuds here at stoked heart-meltingly acting in U.D.S. Alan Piper and Ruth McNaull, Zandy got extraordinary performances. They tackled a difficult text in a mode easily deviously pastoral and tackled it with the authority and confidence of seasoned professionals and more remarkable was the fact that two absolute novices in the other roles, Fiona Macdonald and Martin Hartigan were able to perform to the same unexpectedly high standard.

I found that show very encouraging with W.A.I.T. graduate now finding the professional bench in Perth and sources of the quality of U.D.S.'s *Glaeserfest* going forward, the future of live theatre looks character good. The year is young and some talented young people are really

A thoroughly marketable product. IN PRAISE OF LOVE

by DAVID HILLIER

The new management at Twelfth Night has made a well-calculated and balanced the show with a well-made version of a well-made play.

The opening was a variable night of laughs — in many ways. In fact at the West End theatre was opening a branch in flower (lit). There was professional polish about, and purpose — down to the first roses by fat patients.

As to the play, it is a slightly drafted story about an Italian refugee Lydia, formerly in the resistance, married for twenty-eight years to a kindly socialist, quietly self-created artist (Bartonsen, formerly in British intelligence). They first met in Berlin where he rescued Lydia by marrying her. Now it is discovered separately by husband and wife that she has a normal illness, and out of the discovery comes a sense of their long-neglected love. To find certain, however, the passion remains unchanged. In the end, the play is a finely subtitled pitch for British reserve, which might better be named "La Praise of Good Manners".

Indeed, Lydia's appeal to her son Joey to do an "Irish stagada" — a polite ignoring of his father's infidelities for the sake of family harmony — is a prototype for the elaborate subterfuges she and her husband are playing over her illness. To Rangone the superficial domestic harmony should not be reckoned in search of some rather muted appreciation and enjoyment which might result from a



little abrasion. It is here that one takes issue with the play, not that emotions are worthless, but that carried to extremes they are as nasty as to make a man.

With that in mind, let me mention the hybrid production set up now operating at Twelfth Night, whereby shows are set up and rehearsed by an Artistic Director (Bill Redden) resident in Sydney, using largely young actors who are then transported to Brisbane, where technical aspects of the show are coordinated. On this occasion sets and costumes were made on contract by a QTAC designer (Stephen Goss) to the QTAC workshops. This is a policy that can work commercially and artistically, but at the level of local cultural expression it tends to be fly by night in its results.

Which brings us to the production. Some slip-up between director and designer just the director trots way over in one corner of the set, and the show started badly with a series of marathon walks to re-charge empty glasses. Further, a comparison of a load of re-lighting with bare curtains against bare corps and bare wall paper made the opening staged. By the second act however everything came together, and the total result was quite affecting. I always take it when Australian actors ape that dreary so-called drama style, which is a cliché of English commercial theatre. Mr. Hartigan (Bartonsen) at least has the technical edge to bring it off. Anne Hardy (Lydia), on the other hand, seemed conservative and perhaps Ron Fawcett (Mark Walzer) made the best showing by being simple, honest, and until Greg Parkie had an easy and winning command of the part of Joey. The doctor that went balt during given was an achievement in itself.

All in all a thoroughly marketable product has been produced which should realize the expressed ideal of putting local on merit.

Monash New Plays

GENERAL EDITOR: MARK LINDSAY

Monash New Plays have been established as a continuing series to publish new plays by Australian playwrights. It is especially concerned in doing the work of new writers in the interests of the reading public and in making an original work available to performing arts groups, small casts and amateur groups who make both plays and live action productions.

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Stas a cartoonist

& Vi a businesswoman

After she flew back down to the States, I got to know her a little better. She's a very interesting person. She's been married twice, once to a man who was a drug dealer, and once to a man who was a police officer. She has two children from her first marriage, and she's been estranged from them since she moved to Mississippi with her second husband. They're trying to get custody of their children, but she's been away so long, they don't know if they'll ever see them again.



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Six

I realize we are but a small island case study when under the British Lord, but not in the best of interests of all concerned so completely quiet at all.

There is the overwhelming of theatres in Tasmania as well as film and local television productions and I do heartily request that a correspondent be found to inform you greater Australia of local interesting happenings. And just in a few words of reasons why a Tasman not represented in the National Theatre Awards?

I would also like to take the chance to introduce ourselves, we are a new theatre group whose members and our production still, our first production being *What The Butler Saw*. The locals loved it (for all the wrong reasons) and our next work of love will be *Strength Up-Hammond* a local pub whose owner is looking us a theatre. See someone drew here from the arm! We open on June 8 at the former factory, Launceston.

But seriously, I would love to see your magazine continue in its present form, with the exception of intermissions.

Yours faithfully,
Barry Kingbird,
Art administrator, Playgroup Theatre,
Launceston, Tas.

P.O. Box 1646
NATTI Training,
C.P.O. Melbourne,
Victoria, 3001
Tel: 91 3141

Dear Sir,

May I offer to you as a news item worthy of your attention some detail about the Training

Courses being organized currently by my Association? You will be aware that the NATTI came into being nearly four years ago, and, in Victoria at least, has been able to flourish and prosper at initial stage. One of these was based on the regret that many of the best of our technicians either pass on or pass out of the business, and that abilities and skills are rarely communicated to others.

For two years we have now run successful training courses aimed at the young professionals, the would-be professionals and the dedicated amateurs. Currently we are starting a new venture in a series of weekend courses on a varied range of topics. The first on Make Up Wigs and Hair Styling for the Stage has attracted a full quota of students. There are a limited number of vacancies for most succeeding courses, and application for these should be made to the above address as soon as possible.

Training and practical instruction, plus a good deal of actual involvement, is undertaken by experts in each field, many of whom have spent most of their lives in the commercial theatre. Venues for the courses are almost all theatrical, either on stage, in studio or workshop. For set Construction, for instance we go to the Victorian State Opera Company's workshops and the headquarters of the Melbourne Theater Company. There is no intention of making money in the courses, the Association is maintained as a non-profit making organization. Enclosed are a couple of the introductory brochures for the current training courses, and I trust you will find the programme worthy of mention.

The Victoria body is always ready to welcome new members to the Association and information can be obtained by writing to the Secretary at the above postal box. General

meetings this year have attracted a large following, we have been to the site of Melbourne's largest building project, Collins Place, seen much of our new electrical equipment and its two theatres, and have been introduced to the laser and its applications in stage technology. In May we take a look at one equipped at what must be Australia's largest conventional theatre, the Palace, ended the programme for the year promises to be full of interest both in the mounted and in the newsletter. Perhaps the best aspect of the Association is that it brings people in the business together to talk over old and new times, and gives them a chance to meet the newcomers, both professional and amateur and maybe help them along the road by advice, encouragement or merely conversation.

In thanking you for the anticipated use of some of the above, may I say how much each issue of your splendid magazine is enjoyed?

Yours sincerely,

Alan McPherson,
NATTI Executive Member
A Training Committee,
171 William Street, Melbourne, 3000

Dear Sir,

I don't want to appear unduly sensitive about the comments in the April issue of *Theatre Australia* concerning my action in starting the National Theatre Award. Although I think if you were aware of the lengths to which I went to avoid discrediting the awards, you would share me of my concern in the affair. It was the critics themselves who started the publishing what was supposed to be an absolutely private protest?

However, I would appreciate a correction of my supposed comments in your "Quarrel and Quarrel" page. I did not disagree with the right of critics to a definite opinion. I disagreed with the right of critics to a definitive opinion.

I trust you will agree that there is a world of difference between the two statements.

Yours faithfully,

Ray Lester,
Melbourne, Victoria

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DON'T
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AGAINST
THE
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MATE

ACT 2



ACT 2

SCENE 1

Mr. and Mrs. Herring come in. Mrs. Herring carries a rolling tray with tea and biscuits.

Herriman Nothing for me man, I'm going to Philip's soon's place to dinner.

Theodore You're out as much lately. You seem to hold, you're already married.

Herriman Have you seen my tea-tray?

Theodore Here it is, back on the counter. There's more to come and fresh hair brush. She begins brushing him. You've not married already — or ever?

Herriman What?

Theodore You know what I mean?

Herriman Ah, come on, will you come?

Theodore All right, as that's what you say to Philip.

Herriman Mine for goodness sake!

Theodore Well you wouldn't want Philip to lose respect for you — can you know?

Herriman Merely you know what?

Theodore Come along.

Theodore Last night?

Herriman Have you and dad been fighting?

Theodore No.

Herriman Then are you in the throes of a cold war?

Theodore He did have a good time, though.

Herriman Circumstances.

Theodore He has no wife.

Herriman They never expect him, you know — Philip told me they're dead.

Theodore So what does that prove?

Herriman That he knows what he's about.

Theodore No, he had to get up with anonymous phone calls and letters and the meeting two of his old pals (Frank Dale) talkin' to me at the supermarket — oh, except Gladys (Dolores), who'd been away on vacation this week because her dad had to walk off the job rather than meet with my father.

Herriman If they want to go hunting — that's their business, they can walk with dad if they want.

Theodore But they don't want to move of them.

Herriman Then they can complain about my walking past.

Theodore Frank told me what is really making them mad is your father going past and the rest of the gang not giving anything.

Herriman Well, they should come to their senses here.

Theodore You mean your father should? You could do something, you could see Norman Parker, well he used to be keen on you.

Herriman Your right.

Theodore Well I'll see if you speak to him it could help.

Herriman I'm not considering that — besides, it's up to dad not me. (There is a knock on the

door.) Who will be Phillip? She runs and comes with Phillip.
Phillip Good evening Mrs. DARRIS
Theodore Hello Phillip.

Herriman (I just got my bag.) She comes through doorway.

Phillip That's ridiculous — what is it?

Theodore Fresh news — you should come for tea again soon.

Phillip Yes.

Theodore Tell me who do you make of this thing with my husband?

Phillip Do you really want to know?

Theodore (Oh this can't get any better than this.)

Phillip Well it's a little difficult — I'm sorry I must.

Theodore I know, and I agree totally totally.

Please.

Phillip Look, I'm dreadfully sorry but all this is Union business. I shouldn't even be making a comment on it. This thing could have an effect on the outcome of the election — that's what I mean.

Theodore True of course — I shouldn't have asked you. I'm sorry. There is the junior level of Frank's not in the book about Come in, Herriman receives, with dog. Frank comes from back door with a bunch of important documents under his arm. He takes the services.

Phillip (Just like last year!)

Herriman Yes — not a mention this year is there.

Frankie (Knock at Phillip's door to interrupt?)

Phillip (Look — thanks.)

Frankie (To Phillip) You know I'm starting to like you.

Phillip That's nice of you.

Frankie I know it is. (As Theodore gets a bottle of brandy on a surreptitious. He Captain's compliments to reception.)

He puts the brandy on the table.

Herriman Don't you get tired of having yourself around?

Phillip No, but the competition's good for me — as soon as I'm sorry that at last, things with Philip and me are over again. Philip and me are good mates now, aren't we? (He steps up to a sitting point to Phillip.) Phillip didn't answer suddenly more aggressively.

Philip (Very perturbant.)

Frankie What did I tell you?

Herriman Well we've got to go.

Frankie You and Phillip begin to go.

Frankie Hold your horses — wait till you hear what I've got to tell you.

Theodore (This is just that money?)

Frankie No, we're not — say where is he? He was in the glass house.

Theodore He went home, and he had some trouble in so would you believe.

Herriman We haven't got all night, what's the news?

Frankie (That's it.) Turn on the news and post'll keep.

Theodore The news?

Frankie Yes (He goes to TV and switches it off.)

Yours sincerely,

The TV screen is now in prime air. Frank's voice above coming.

Frankie Should be on in a minute.

Theodore What is it?

Frank turns out the cigarette.

Frankie We've a TV set in the family. Bob, made the big name, but his name, name (from Melbourne) flew down to increase his today. Wanted to get some pictures of Bob's action into the job and his going walked off. But Phillip would be in on that. So they poor old Bob with a step in the background. His prior friend of him I am, can you imagine Bob on TV?

Theodore You change with the word you do?

Frankie Hang on to Theodore, twelve thousand men at the most powerful Unions in Australia are he got ecology that is really something (that is).

Herriman Don't let your Uncle have you in that.

Frankie (Snapping fingers) No worries, it's a storm in a teacup of all he's ever seen. But what I was going to say this TV is a god to do like good. Good health and get people to buy it. I'll tell you (smiling). There's more than a few of the blokes (smiles) want to tell sorry for Bob's action. (Herriman looks very angry at him.) York. It might work yet.

Frankie (Smiling) It's not a game of chance!

Frankie No it's even a game of cricket, you can't tell but I'll tell you it's a bloody good game. Good players — very long — keep them in it. (He goes to TV unbroken, it shows up.)

Int. (Kitchen) ... and the old works now in which could be called a state mine. Mr. Davies (smiling) the what when my number reached. (Herriman) I've decided to open the door to the city."

Bob (Says) Is just as sensible to make the local (smiling).

Int. (Kitchen) But aren't you gone too far?

Bob (Smiling) I am.

Int. (Kitchen) ... is at your place, the master is in the Federal Secretary's hands now?

Bob (Smiling) I wouldn't know (he has Bob, (smiling) why I'm going?"

Bob (smiling) or the power or want by anyone (smiling) that are too bad (smiling) regarding the TV — acknowledge his appearance.

Bob (Smiling) I choose money anyway,

Bob (Smiling) that's why I'm going?"

Bob (Smiling) Bob.

Int. (Kitchen) Bob, it's worth being sent (smiling) to?

Bob I have my say that will I want.

Int. (Kitchen) But not worth it?

Bob — And for that they treat me like a good brother.

Int. (Kitchen) So power, not breaking down as?

Bob (Smiling) with I can eat.

Int. (Kitchen) No, well thank you, Mr. Davies. This is from Mr. Davies reporting from those unfortunate or something. (Frank catches off TV.)

Frankie (to Bob) You're really no good now — break up money?" (as you're really

decision was you have Jesus.

Thelma (Dad) Thompson

Frankie You have never brought up that you have.

Beth That's your opinion.

Frankie (giving up) I'm not leather, man! I go with.

Noreen Do you have to go so早就?

Frankie No — you Beth you could have been a lot more diplomatic like you could have gone some places to get some ideas on your role you were.

Phillip We had leather in going. Not sure leather's appropriate.

Noreen Dad, understand, at Philip for a moment reference to there and she is fully aware of what is going on.

(Noreen) What's going on?

Frankie Oh, take care of her father and give him a kiss on the cheek! You have great duty. Come on.

Thelma Don't be too late home.

Frankie See you later — all the rest.

Phillip Sorry we're running late — goodbye.

Beth Goodbye Phillip.

There is a silence. Thelma is looking really at both Frank and Phillip curiously.

Frankie Ah — oh.

Beth What?

Frankie Uh, nothing — nothing — all nothing.

Beth Is that all?

Frankie Yeah, I mean no, guess! You have suggested it to you.

Beth Mm-hmm.

Thelma goes to the doorway. There is an unspoken silence between them two.

Frankie I had to do this today; you know that's type?

Beth Forget it.

Frankie Well as long as you understand.

Thelma Thank you for some nice Frank."

Frankie Not enough time.

Thelma I've got no time to sit here.

Frankie Photo, photo, photo! Uh, that's the another right here! (She does) Well as long as you do.

Beth I used to do.

Thelma takes, with pepper and salt over.

Frankie Good, I thought you would. I had to happen a second time.

Beth Will you leave it?

Frankie I had to say something to my mother or Thelma (Beth was supposed to be in our gang today) I had to walk off with the other. Didn't you understand — it had to happen sooner or later, dad!

Beth Will you bloody leave it!

Frankie I'm just trying to explain.

Beth Forget it for Christ sake!

Thelma See?

Beth And so I think it's over.

Frankie Oh, look! I've got you here, I thought.

Beth Sure you won't? Right?

Frankie Are you right?

Her smile on her back door curiously, but is also in her eyes! Well goodnight.

Frankie Bye.

Beth Like a sleepy love.

Thelma (To Bill) So thank you for essential services.

Bill Well I'm going to have a few more guns to entertain myself.

Thelma I'm sorry — all you do is buy and drink like we're with a crew of deer and drink from twisted pretzels what I want?

Bill Yes. You heard me.

Thelma You're making a complete idiot of yourself.

The phone rings. Bill goes to the phone. He picks it up and finally he does so.

Bill Alright, express yourself — oh God! — I thought — never mind when I thought how are you? — well I understand, but do I know if you long distance (God!) is a big happened person? Well if you saw the TV tonight you should understand because I'm not trying to make a fool of anyone (smiles). Look, how about losing down that Sunday then? Alright give me a ring within ten days. Do you want to speak to your mom?

Alright I'll tell her goodbyes now.

He hangs up. Thelma comes out of a room and places them on the table.

Thelma Angels of death or?

Bill You'd be a fool, he said he would run you down in the next.

Beth (Sighs) I don't think they fresh provide pepper and salt or dinner, though. (Thelma laughs)

Thelma You go down and pay attention again (she takes his hand) as a request of Noreen Bob you are.

Bill You! Thelma I'm going to get the car to the car and.

Thelma And that's more you Bob understand? (Bob shrugs his shoulders again)

Bill Look at it. I'm sorry about all this — really.

Thelma Oh you've never known understand in your life.

Bill Looking at the wife with a suddenly cold expression! And you've never known life in your relationship.

Thelma You really think you're clever baby, don't you know? Why can't you be reasonable like everyone else like Frank for example?

Bill Like Frank? (he stands up and moves around) Physical! Like Frank? Why do I have to be like Frank, I'm not like him I am.

Thelma Don't I know it.

Bill What's what supposed to mean?

Thelma Nothing.

Bill You do, yes you do! Let's straighten this out!

Thelma Yes, let's straighten but not like you would like to think. When you take you away you're beautiful, mysterious, of course and lonely.

Bill I've had it. I'm on my way now, but I need to answer.

He's walking right after her now.

Thelma Do you see? What about me?

Bill Nothing!

Thelma What?

Bill Money, money on your side, slutty and want, who's concerned more about? Now I've got something I want to say.

Thelma (smiling) How does your speech,

longer when you think about it? Because you're in the end the absolute last.

Bill It's been the end for most that recent year.

Frankie Please.

Thelma (Colds) Move all your things out of my room.

Bill Looking appropriate! Things out of my room!!

Thelma No, I don't the only person you think of what do you think, please, get that outta you no special from everybody else? Can we talk about?

Bill Please, listen this, when someone that disappears out of you and everybody, it somebody outside more than that. Does you that I could change things if I could, don't you think, all would be as can can? And I can't either. I'm walking down a dark road with no light at the end, but where there is no light behind me either, so far as I go, I gotta keep going otherwise I'll just sit down and die at the distance, do you understand?

Thelma You're thinking only of yourself, you what I understand.

Bill I thought it was, but I'm stuck with the January cow and there's no morning milk. And I'm afraid half I do anything to run in the dark back but I'm exhausted. How do you think, I feel walking along the ancestors' back more than a hundred hundred ways of the world, how do you think that kind people always live, I know all my life refusing to walk with the greater. Do you think it has been easy for me do you still believe that? She stars at her hoping for a reply, and says, (Thelma remains staring at the floor)

I'll tell you something. I used to run my legs when you asked me to. I walked up to Noreen Parker in front of several houses. I said to myself, alright, get up and stand by Bob what does it matter, but when I saw Thelma, now I consider I just couldn't pay. I'm sorry. I really am, seriously! I wish I could have. I really do things would be better now. I always looked I turned around and walked away. She whispers Dying understanding all.

There is a pause and Thelma walks up to Bill from the right.

Thelma I understand that woman I've known all my life does not have time to speak to me. I understand that, and I understand you're causing trouble because Philip and Noreen the way you are going on.

Bill I didn't know that?

Thelma There's a lot of things you don't know, but do you think the whole business has been for me? Oh, it's a sight for you men to play your little games of power and besides that when it affects us, your family do you have the right to make us have to play your power game? (She says) you brought you that night you started just the right in all.

There is a silence as both the absolute last are in each other. Bill turns away.

Bill What's this year, seven above Norton and Phillip?

Thelma Not much yet, but it will very soon!

and me, unless you're willing to pay a good deal more for work because of you.
Peter I didn't know that — I think about a lot of things about it. But everybody is against me and I don't get some friends left. I have. I have, people in the next parish up and down who are bound to your group. Not the government you feel. The ones that you see when the editorial in the paper said? I stand for the individual as such an important thing, that's what they can do you, or as far as I'm concerned. Look at here. *Gaines Head*

Asked by interviewers if that would distract him when they read *Gaines Head* and I think I'll see the light at the end of the tunnel. I think I will come to, like Peter.

Theatrical That tends to right up some things that you didn't and doesn't make a man over自信 with the influence of some Churches.

He walks down to his room from and we drop down into front of both sets of the chair and he prints off his new leaflet again.

Pitcher Right, when you come. Come along, we'll be back home.

With the light down to half, Bob Dry's a dinner jacket which the rest of the chairs have either a shadow and the only light that remains is on the *Pagan Art* *Gaines Head* on my desk looks down from the set.

SCENE 2

There is no sound. The tables covered with a clothed on which the papers and biscuits, sugar and milk. **Pitcher** is sitting on *Bob Dry's* arm chair. He sits under there a sort of egotistical a house divided creates with open mouth. **Theatre** Dries in the kitchen from where she always comes with the right of her in the dialogue begins. From the kitchen she comes through the door *Bob Dry's* and at the point where Frank enters there is complete silence. **Theatre** leaves the stage.

Theatrical Do you eat milk Norma?

Pitcher Milk, and I wouldn't.

Theatrical Some cake?

Pitcher No thanks.

Theatrical I give myself with my cake.

Pitcher I'm sure they're more but no thanks.

Theatrical How long have you been married now?

Pitcher There — no love, four years.

Theatrical I use your mother someone had the last you've got a boy.

Pitcher Two boys now, no no time before they'll be playing for the money.

Theatrical You should have a girl?

Pitcher Yeah, I might have one of them yet — look at *Bob Dry's* face one for hours around the body. I must admit I was surprised when I first came and saw me probably, says you wanted to see me.

Theatrical Well, this social progress hasn't gone,

or like that *Gaines Head*.

Pitcher Yeah, yeah it does, but most that had an end. This has been going on for too long, before me I live for it — it can be ended in an orderly fashion.

Theatrical That's what I think, that it should be sorted out in a orderly manner.

Pitcher Well no agree, because progress is a very important thing when it comes to negotiating believe me if you can't agree at all well if you can't work together — that's what I've found.

Theatrical I suppose you get quite a bit of practice in negotiation.

Pitcher Yeah, yeah I do, but so far I haven't seen exactly this sort of thing, it's usually with the big bodies, not fellow workers, this things gets me quite puzzled at times.

Theatrical I feel the same way.

Pitcher I suppose it's hard for a member like yourself to understand my position — Oh, *George Bush*, go on to my. My individual members don't seem to be in their situation, otherwise I wouldn't be doing my job. Why, to be honest I've got a lot more to do for Bob than a good I mean when I say that, and it troubles me to see him taken in one like this, after working on the whole for thirty years and having such a strong member.

Theatrical He hasn't been home, I assume.

Pitcher Yeah, agreement, I'm sure — but you can see my situation isn't it? I wouldn't be here if I was with a lot of old, well-positioned know who would happen next — members might decide not to pay their Union dues, we just couldn't afford that situation, I assume?

Theatrical No, I understand.

Pitcher I understand, I really hope you do, you do, but in a way I've got a confidence problem if I see it and that all you can do for it.

Theatrical You.

Pitcher And in my case, I think, I've been able to come up with a total no problem to teach people, at least I hope so, that is, where you might be in a little help.

Theatrical Well, I'll be.

Pitcher Much could you wish you to speak to Bob Dry's in front of us we will be doing the whole matter. Some sort of honest if you go ahead party to negotiate things in situations like this, things can go smoother. My idea is Bob Dry's the whole thing and we do the same, of course we will have to have something to that effect in writing you know, just to make the thing proper like. It doesn't worry me, but Dry's been engaged in a will make that feel easier. I have the Federal Experience from Sydney in news tomorrow and I can bring him around here or whatever Bob wants, as long as he can have something in writing.

Theatrical Frank said he was going to be here, what's to worry?

Pitcher No, that's more than I said — that he's with me, he's the master and the taught to pay his social levy of course — I just they word some nonsense he won't change his mind and withdraw?

Theatrical I think so, I think Frank can help.

Pitcher I will speak of this about.

Theatrical Well, I'll seriously try, because I'm probably honest. I seem to have lost my influence. I might have had over him. He's become so, so hard to get through to, so suspicious of everybody. I don't mind telling you talking with *Bob Dry's* in *Gaines Head*. You know we have been receiving threatening phone calls they have been terrible, absolutely terrible!

Pitcher I am very sorry about that believe me, I wouldn't have anything to do with something like that. If I know who was I'd pull him out quick and smart. The trouble is people get carried away in situations like this and to be honest I don't know if I can hold the union on some of the traps for much longer. I'll put my contact over there, nobody has. Please don't make that a threat. I didn't want to start this but the situation is getting out of my control.

Theatrical I see.

Pitcher I'm glad you do — *Boggs* — *Bob Dry's* — should be in touch in ten minutes we can be around and come from there on, can you the whole union, local and District with us half an hour.

Theatrical If I do, I have an idea, you can, eventually help.

Pitcher That's quite simple. Marks it would have been hours if I had had this meeting long ago.

The front door is heard to open.

Theatrical That will be *Marcus*, she gets home in ten minutes.

Pitcher Marcus?

"Marcus" comes straight along to the stage as she does.

Marcus What do you want?

Theatrical One, I'd like that "Marcus" to have my help.

Marcus Help who?

Pitcher If you could call our members to see if anyone knows anything with your old man.

Marcus Here.

Pitcher In the most relaxed fashion we can do it.

Marcus That's no doubt you thought you did.

Theatrical One I'd like that "Marcus" to have my help.

Pitcher Marcus, I'm in fact, and used of this moment as the time is.

Marcus You don't look very well and I'm sorry.

Pitcher You're taking the wrong road in this matter, you really are.

Marcus From your point of view, on double I am.

Pitcher I'm trying to look at this thing as fairly as possible, otherwise I wouldn't be here.

Marcus Putting down a handful of soldiers perhaps?

Theatrical You're not being fair to Marcus.

Marcus Am I?

String up *Pitcher* who continues to have his interview.

Horace No.

Horace continues to look curiously at Mrs. P.

Pearl Horace can't you see that each person

Horace Perhaps if it were an agreement might have been established by now.

Horace What do you mean?

Horace Someone once said to me you can do anything to anybody as long as you don't have to look them in the eye. I think I understand what he meant more.

Pearl Horace doesn't make it my burden than on for me.

Horace If you'll?

Pearl Yes, for me. Horace, there is no understanding about "Well I must be off this thing, Mrs.

Horace What's wrong? She is composed. I think Davis is much too hasty to expect her not

Horace I thought it was a pleasure went, sir.

Pearl Right, right. And likewise Mrs. Davies — thanks for the afternoon tea. And don't worry, it will all be fine, I assure you.

Horace You're right.

Horace Davis much over played his open invitation to discussion of her mother's family.

Horace And when they talk, well, was all that above?

Horace Mr. Pecher called that all he wanted to help.

Horace I didn't say or let him, but like that just like Foster already did the other night.

Horace Yes, that's right, you know. Not I did that. Horace, why shouldn't I?

Horace What did he have to say?

Horace Just that he was willing to forget the whole matter of your father.

Horace But he does, just like that?

Horace Yes, well, just that sometimes it would fit into the way it has forever world?

Horace No. I suppose this other situation is as closed and buried that every other business is nothing at all about.

Horace Please your father, he thinks all of his life, a lifetime, is set purpose.

Horace That's not true. He's had no longer going there's been anything he hasn't.

Horace What about us? Is this we have a place?

Horace We've got to expect to share some of that load with him.

Horace You may, but not me, what do I need him? Father tell me!

Horace I didn't realize things had become that bad between you.

Horace Well, we're about now, you looked around.

Horace Mom?

Horace She doesn't say I don't think I can take with more of this, I really don't.

Horace Repeating her mother's words, I don't say I'm not all that bad.

Horace I got one of these threatening phone calls again — the language was filthy and and he threatened to blow our house up.

Horace They have really been hard on you

now?

Horace Keeping over from her daughter, she puts paper over her eyes with a handkerchief like a cap?

Horace Alright, if there's no going. It had a terrible day today — (Horace goes to the telephone and goes to the window). Oh, Horace there are presents, there was a draft. However under the open door all day and the roof was leaking at one stage we had three buckets and a dog catching water at once.

Horace I have been running heavy here.

Horace That's a change.

Horace The house is for a close observer.

Horace In it, shall it be good, I might be able to get the books out at the open for a while.

Horace Keeping open windows?

Horace For that problem, a window.

Horace Didn't you say you made a hole in your swimming equipment? (He comes home with a cup of tea for her daughter and one for herself) He wants your father to sign a paper.

Mariah And Mariah Parker?

Horace Yes.

Horace So what?

Horace That the master is over red about with... forgotten. And that he'll pay too far money you know the theory.

Horace Well, I suppose there had to be something in that all?

Horace Yeah, that's all.

Horace Didn't you give them over a barrel you know.

Horace And what does that prove?

Horace Nothing, except they want to finish the master more than that does. You're been reading the papers. The man in the various's opinion is certainly not so nice in favour of Dad's stand. I hope the Queen wouldn't like that.

Horace This master has gone to see for long.

Horace You're right.

Horace You won't tell your father, Horace will hear with you?

Horace No.

Horace He wouldn't like it.

Horace No. I don't imagine he would — what are you going to tell him?

Horace I don't know yet.

Horace There is the *final* knock of Pecher, on the back door which the open without raising for an answer.

Horace Here we go — sorry I'm late, Horace isn't?

Horace I thought you were gone, to be here when the next?

Frank Sorry love — got held up. Well, you're both still, there like you've been caught with your tails between your legs.

Horace You were going to be here.

Frank I just put off my shift. Bob here?

Horace Repeating his usual greeting, he answers.

Bob Hello there.

Frank Only about how are you man?

Bob Alright.

Horace Would you mind passing that Gibson guitar outside.

Bob Sure. Horace audience to Frank to be a credit what he says. Bob answers.

Horace I must get charged. I'm having dinner at Susan's.

Susan's —

Frank Well how you been?

Bob I'm surprised at that, what you mean. I haven't seen much of you lately.

Frank That's not true — I did had a busy couple of weeks.

Bob You?

Frank It's true — don't you believe those days?

Horace I want to have a talk to you. Horace good a smile to my (Horace laughs).

Bob Good.

Horace She looks at Frank for support.

Frank Look, maybe it's better if I leave.

Horace You're here.

Frank Well, let me get a beer.

Bob Well, what are you?

Horace I've had a short a lot of thinking and I don't believe that. One thing can't do for much longer.

Bob Right?

Horace So you or you to see Horace. Father and I.

Horace Father.

Horace Mum, you up tell you (He walks up to his mother and takes her hand on her Thelma sign her down and Thelma here, I appreciated something?)

Bob I don't think so.

Frank I'm serious about one of beer.

Horace I was just asking your father because pay for beer.

Bob What do you think Horace?

Horace Well, of course it's your decision, but I had all you can of hand.

Bob And?

Horace A few more beers.

Horace His wife — that's Philip — I tried pretty.

Bob The exact right of singer.

Frank Don't be too hard to come in these days.

Horace I think for a moment like.

Bob What's the game?

Horace To Philip's orders place.

Horace Infligging! What did you say?

Philip Sorry, wasn't Horace.

Horace Well it's probably nothing, but the will they run out of your back drive. I thought I should tell you.

Horace Who put out of our back drive?

Philip Those men who took off from P.

Horace Are you mad?

Philip You, I am sure.

Horace What do you think they could have been up to?

Horace We've had threatening phone calls lately, they even said they'd plant a bomb.

Frank Did you report that to the police?

Horace Bob wouldn't let me.

Frank You should have Bob.

Bob No one would do anything, there was no guarantee in making a fuss.

...and then Arthur and David enter from the left carrying books, from the left. Arthur looks up at the head covering for some time.

ARTHUR just burst out.

He shouts, and then with all his strength he shoves the book case at the head covering. There is no straight leg from him, he is shouting like a wild animal, he moves in his anger and falls into it. His palms are hands over his face and scratch each

hand over. She then walks to the opposite side. Back pen and paper she begins to write. After a while she stands up, looks around, moves and suddenly then she walks to the other side.

THEMUS Frank. Thelma come and get me alone... please... you just can't understand us... we're not... we're not... I'm leaving this place. David comes back door carrying his writing case. Thelma looks for a moment as if she might break them pieces or has just given in now!

She turns up there is an awkward silence between them. Bob begins moving his piano students, he stops and places his case on the floor. Thelma runs her fingers as if to comfort as she does not stroke herself.

BETH They didn't get them all — the况 they think will want these old girls in latrine afternoons like a couple? Thelma does not answer. He returns to keyboard — it is obvious he is not in the mood at all. Thelma stands behind the chair. The table won't be long, plaster white! Like the way it just happened. Her very slight sadness looks Thelma like turns on his chair and looks at her but can't do it you can't look I'll tell you what will hold you off on the floor tonight you and me you're used to her. Why, well even not one fire. After all I suppose we are in our tenth year, but about that and the others she has remained.

THEMUS They don't say Beth anymore.

Although the scene ends with Bob still a sprawl, but nothing covers. The death whistle, the little car in front.

BOB (smiling) Thelma how about a song, something?

THEMUS The little car before.

BOB (smiling) probably it's the death and the rebirth that you can't — you don't just go like that, you just can't!

THEMUS There's also a part of being next to the hedge — you shouldn't need anything for a few days, except a few odds and ends.

BOB You are serious aren't you?

THEMUS It is with a smile.

Bob looks away from his wife. Then there is a knock at the back door. Frank cheerfully enters. Thelma doesn't pick up the welcome. Both Frank and Bob go out. There is a hesitation as both men leave at such other. Then Bob says half, goes slightly for Frank to understand, take the case. Thelma walks out the back door. Frank for a moment stops back in before he's going to say something that exists. After a time Bob goes over to the table and takes an orange. Finally, Arthur rises and reaches.

BETH (smiling) Look! See you talk and a bit more, not much. Ranch, cup of sugar. Hey Gregson. (He goes to another and sits in it — looks back again) (see on back in a quiet voice) Oh Christ. Jesus Christ.

Frank out.

END OF PLAY



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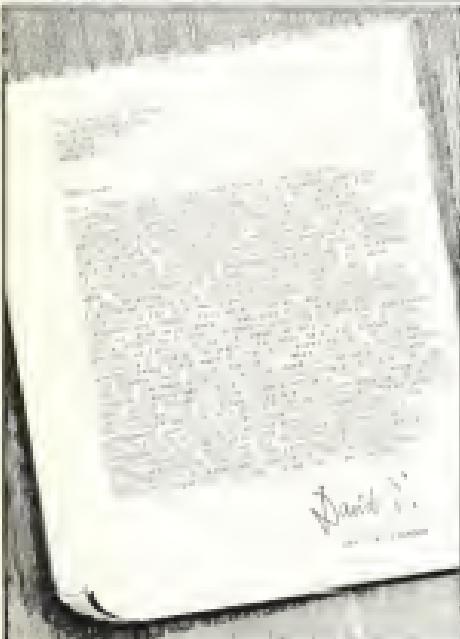
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Tristan: A Set That Began An Era

Hindsight suggests that Decca's 1961 issue of a recording of *Tristan und Isolde* conducted by Georg Solti began an era. It is true that Decca had begun an unrelenting complete recording of *The Ring* slightly earlier than this, but Tristan certainly had the greater impact when it first appeared because it was a complete work and generated no speculation as to how an unfinished project might continue. The resolution of Tristan was, first of all, the quality and immediacy of the orchestral sound. Decca received some criticism at the time for placing the orchestra so far forward in perspective and for seeming to neglect the equal terms with the voices of the principals. Up to then, I think it is true to say, most opera recordings had tended to give clear priority to the voices and to set the orchestra some distance further back in the spatial perspective of the whole. This reinforced the impression of an operatic given of visual performance in a number of famous opera houses, where the position of the orchestra in a deeply recessed pit enabling close body rooms to share out more prominently.

Decca and in particular its producer John Culshaw were not seeking to reproduce an opera house performance but to achieve something else in the way of balance and perspective. This new ideal recognized the opportunities as well as the limitations of the recording studio and sought to take positive advantage of them instead of apologizing for them or minimizing them. It was as if the human ear was being offered a chance to hear and attend to all components of the opera with maximum intensity, no one element in the way that a very skilled vocal reader might place the work together in his own imagination. The orchestra could be heard in unprecedented splendour, but there was no fear that the voices would be lost as a result. Fine adjustments in recording balance and the ability of stereo recording to present different versions of sound simultaneously without necessarily silencing one to be resumped provided the technical means for this to be achieved.

The second revelation of the new set was an extension of the first, because clear that Decca had adopted a policy of presenting Tristan on disc as an experience that could take advantage of resources not available in the theatre. The way that the eighteen hours used for the heating scenes at the beginning of Act Two were dispensed through the studio to as to give an impression of the gradual disappearance of the heating party into the distance would be rarely, if ever, practicable backstage in the theatre. The special colour surrounding the singing of the marching Branquais, as it all was surrounded by some kind of incandescent haze, was another remarkable device. It may also have been useful for the purpose of diagnosing or selecting the rather obscure

best in Regine Resnik's voice as the singing part.

Less obvious at the time was the fact that this recording gave a sensitive basis, from Ulli, the choice to partner Regine Nilsson, without our finding that her relatively small voice made her unfit for the part. In retrospect it seems as if Ulli's singing of the part of Tristan in this recording was the high point of his career. Though he wrote on to make many important appearances, I do not think he achieved a greater artistic success than in that Decca set of 1961. Masters of Nation also reminds us that we were not nearly as ready then to take the gigantic, brilliant and formidable voice of this singer for granted. I had heard Ulli sing in the theatre in her final years of toddler and knew what a great tool he could make like the fresh strength and absolute certainty of Nilsson through the part in this recording born on the assumption of a prolonged and apparently inaccessible journey. Displaying Ulli's work with the cast and the Vienna Philharmonic enabled him to take a decisive step towards his deserved supremacy with this recording and the superiority it established with the release of these discs still belongs to him as far as I am concerned. It did not prevent me from pleasure in recent years, that is simply because my copy showed the scars of the early amateur playing more and more as time went on and as playback equipment became more sensitive. Decca has mercifully re-pressed and re-released the set so that it can now be enjoyed in all its original glory [Decca 0410 316 after]. The pity is, in fact, all the greater now because many of us will be playing it through better systems. The era that began with the Decca *Tristan* and its slightly earlier *Ring* would see the domination of these sets spread through the thinking of the recording industry. It is true that many new open sets of the present day fall far short of these recordings in their ability to make a positive merit of the studio process. Even Decca has retreated from the advanced position of some of its earlier essays of the 1960's. That is because many recordings are undertaken without the thorough pre-planning that was adopted for *Tristan* and *The Ring* series. But the conclusion of the administration and its function as a permanent, standard and unrepentant remains. One persistent legacy of the Decca techniques of the 1960's, I believe, has been to make a greater prominence and closer presence of the sectional parts in an often almost general.

Jean Sutherland's disc entitled *Songs My Mother Taught Me* (Decca, re-issued on Australia by the World Record Club R 00100) might seem simply one of those crowd-pleasing collections of taste or judgment that are likely to catch up with most famous singers from time to time. In

fact, I believe it is as central to her art as anything she has ever put on disc. The title can be taken literally to some extent. Sutherland heard some of these songs sung by her mother, who from all accounts was a nervous soprano of great promise who was able to sing pleasantly up to the time of her death at the age of seventy four. At least that is how her illustrious daughter remembers her and that may be all that matters. It is apparently a fact that Sutherland's mother was a pupil of Birthe Walker, who herself studied with Mendelssohn and Lamperti. It is not hard to deduce that Sutherland's great and lasting success has been built up on some extent on singing habits acquired in early childhood. Furthermore, it is very evident that Sutherland herself finds strength in acknowledging the singing tradition from which she comes. By that I mean the tradition of operatic-soprano and draw-song ballads which were the inheritance of a young singer growing up in Australia in the earlier part of this century. There is certainly no trace of condescension in her attitude or voice when she sings Amy Mace's "Midsummer" or "I was dreamt by" the Australian resident Australian Jacinta Macleod's "On Wings of Song", the song by Decca from which the record borrows its title, character pieces by Delibes and songs by Mendelssohn and Gray take their place with "Bonnie Mary of Argyl", French La Farge's "I Came With A Song", and Terence Del Rago's "Hunting", in a programme of much charm and musical fun. The quotation marks of the occasion are supplied mainly by Douglas Gresham's arrangements, which do credit to the weaker numbers, a little Rudolf Baragonja condones the New Philharmonic Orchestra and the original recording was obviously difficult indeed.

Karajan's new recording of the new symphonies of Berlioz (Philips 7500 172-28 eight discs) will surely be lauded, I understand, as a series of single discs. I have been enjoying the boxed set for its variously variegated quality and consistency of sound in this music and for the evenly balanced and differentiated performances given by Karajan with his marvellous Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. In case someone should sound like a heretic of mine, I should add that the performances in general have all the strength and vigour that most listeners expect to find in satisfying recordings of the Berlioz symphonies. I was slightly disappointed with Karajan's reading of the fourth symphony, and many listeners are bound to prefer this or that recording of one of the symphonies I cannot think of any other, at least, which is as well recorded as this throughout or as consistent in performance and style. The set rises to its greatest heights in an absolutely outstanding account of the ninth symphony.



The Australian Dance Theatre is now one year old. Having performed eight seasons collectively in South Australia and Victoria, gathered together an amazingly large repertoire and discovered already a enough of choreographic talents within its own ranks, one would say that by and large it is self supporting. Having a local audience (usually growing) also helps.

I fear that some audiences may have made the wrong judgement on the strength of the American choreographers' season that was the ADT offering for the Festival. For it was to me and for many audiences a deep disappointment and as far as the company is concerned, definitely sorry remnants.

Why the decision was made to have an all American programme I don't know, but to have four works, two of them "light" and two "heavy" particularly when the people involved are not really of the local rank, strike me as amateur and less often than not. Far better to have had a wider selection with at least one Australian work. Since the new idea of the Adelaide Festival is to have Australian works one would have thought that the ADT, being more flexible might have taken the lead, seeing that the SATC and the State Opera had it.

One's we would have been diluted if the works were wise of some worth but only one or two of them were appropriate for keeping. There are lots of good to great American creators to chose from all of widely divergent styles. People like Harry Charlap, Jonathan Brindley, Robert Wilson, Elliot Field, Louis Falzon and Troyla Thorpe, but surely it is Australian choreographers that should be given the chance to try and test before all those comparable overseas pieces?

On the strength of her first work for the ADT, Sara Sughrue, I venture to suggest, is best left to let her prove a bit and then venture out as a choreographer. She and the company could be better served by getting her out here for a prolonged season to work within the company and improve her work as it goes along. Sughrue's piece *F* has a lot less potential than some pieces by Australian based creators who are still writing on the backblocks for attention.

It is certainly throwaway, and that is about the best thing that could be said about it. With a cast comprising a row of low stools and a projected back drop of Mount Fuji that has little to do with anything, the piece is one of those works that wonder around aimlessly looking for a form and a framework.

The cast of five wear black leotards over coloured tights and one of the cast is always stereotypically out of sync with the others, a renegade that precipitates much frisking and fooling about from the others. But even the renegade isn't true to

type, she shoves off the kisses and generally makes a nuisance of herself and then goes straight into a very ordinary dance sequence of any sort of character goes for a button. The sort of the dance sequences aren't that interesting either, being of the step, kick, stretch, bend variety that scratches on by fits and starts, stabs and partials faded by an unceasing brightness. The ADT dancers performed it with an acute lack of aplomb on their faces which is about all they could do poor things.

When Yorkie's *Celebration* popped up, I thought that there must be something in Eugene Lacy's choreography that made them so optimistic and suddenly joyful, something that I had missed. *Celebration* has much the same sort of anecdotal, athletic fireworks but to a but at least had the strong sense of patterning that was attractive and dynamic. Totality plain, it was easy, shiny and a little bit gregarious, peppered with lung leaps, jumps and small hand fistworks. The music was a Weill's concerto which always makes me suspicious. So many ballroom teachers use this style of music with lots of busy notes so they can make lots of busy little steps into it, kidding themselves that they possess a bound choreographic memory. Yorkie's skill however saved it from becoming a sort little routine number. During the finale the dancers collected around with roses in their hands, placing them in a vase at the end, a perfectly touch that did nothing for me to be the ballet.

More interesting, and not just because of its more "serious" subject matter, was Cliff Keister's *For One Who Died Young*.

Someone told me that this was the elegy that Keister had composed for his younger brother who had been killed by a sniper's bullet on Malibu beach, but it looked like it to me.

The work begins with a clutch of others gathered over the corpse of a young man. They utter oaths and excommunicate him to the void, fall into twisted loops of escape and self protection, none of them wanting to take the blame for what happened. They nodules of a dance phrase are passed from one to the other, growing to create an accumulation, a feeling of reflective and personal loss, phrases that pool away to reveal each of them alone whilst together. They all realize that it could have happened to them and one day might. The corpse Luxuria-like comes to life and tears through the group as if haunting them or trying to give comfort but more will be experienced. As the ghost flutters through this gaunt ribbon group, these sequences loop in on themselves, past and present interwoven, while feet, history and memory become tangled. In fact there are too many tangled strands in the work. The sense of loss and

grief is immediately conveyed, but the physical and emotional impact of the event on each person isn't all that clearly illustrated, it remains essentially just an event, a reaction and a group resolution. Perhaps it was longer and the material given more time to work itself out, these strands could have been more intrinsically underlined. As it was, it wasn't for the communication and edge intensity that the ADT dancers brought to it. For *One Who Died Young* could have resulted into a sense of narrative writing, ripe for the analysis couch.

But instead of the coherence of the dances in this work brings me to the notion of the major dance piece of the programme, Keister's *Faith* remained remote and ambiguous. Most of the dances were confused and didn't quite know what it was supposed to be saying. Most of the company's dances are characteristically treated; they do not yet have enough dramatic stage experience, but have been taught to "sell" the product as classroom is wont to. That distinction makes all the difference in both an expressive and lyrical work such as this. To say that *Faith* trends deep into Eugene O'Neill country is to categorize it easily, but it is flooded with O'Neill's cumulative power, his pain and obscenities and his father/son love/hate themes.

The idea of *Faith* is simple and timeless, that all a son leaving the family for the first time and the web of memory, love and power that will bind him. The family as such is peripheral, existing only to form the father/son struggle for dominance and/or release. One sees the event through both their eyes, of the son solving childhood struggles, of the father reliving his past through his son and the memory becoming too much. The casts for the two men are at times tender and gentle, coloured by maple leafs and trusting balances, at others they become a grapple, brought harder for dominance.

A clue to this work is the title chosen, being given by George Miller, ("Song of the Earth", Beethoven's 4th movement from the 3rd symphony). All of these songs deal with remembrance, joy, sorrow, transcendence and loss.

Mike Brown as the son and Joe Soglio as the father are obviously good actors/dancers, otherwise the theme of father/son would never have come across. They were father and son locked into an interior struggle, not a couple of homosexuals having a spat as it could have appeared in lesser hands, the rest of the company should take note this time round.

Things are bound to improve once the work settles into repertoire. It is continual performance of works like this that make them live, not just rehearsed.

Being handed by space, the only other creation of the ADT's *Feature* season it can

mention is the choreography for the *Rites of Dionysus* that Jonathon Taylor choreographed for the production of *The Merchant of Venice*. I was not aware of any differentiation or progress in theme in any of them, but that might have been partially the lack of the angularly hideous and dangerous set of John Corcoran, stamped with glad rags, fringes and four ply fly pads at the most difficult angles. Nevertheless, despite the ingenuous and cramped conditions it was only these dances that received any feeling of exhilaration and wonderment in which the opera is supposed to abound.

Of the other offerings at the Festival, all the smaller experimental groups from Sydney I will talk about later, when space permits. To the Kalathai Theatre, a veritable iconoclast. I simply kept waiting I could have seen the entirety in Japan itself. Cultural excess, like there rarely travel well, as seen by Peter Daubney adapted. The much lauded Polish White Ballet. There was a disastrous bare Simpatico scenario, repetitious choreography and a total lack of ecstasy and incandescent joy and total despair (all themes central to both the Becker and Thewald) made this tormented production one of the most depressing and yet endearing evenings I have ever sat through. Given the same

theme, why did our own company could have done a better job (witness Graeme Murphy's *Peggy* of which more next?)

Of the works in the first programme of the Australian Ballet's Sydney season, Jon Kelian's *Symphony in D* and Louis Faloci's *Cavorts* were selected by Anne McDonald, Frederick Ashton's *The Dream* was selected by Dame Peggy van Praagh. In view of the agreeable works in the season, this speaks volumes to me. Despite Savion's *Spartacus* being the big exception, many members of the AB are apprehensive about a return to the bad old days when the AB was having the style of the Royal Ballet foisted upon it, a style that just does not sit well on the home trees. Our company has its own manner and outlook, one which is gutsy, amiable and dramatic, not elegant, effete and as poised as the Royal. Any attempt to "echos" the AB will be a disaster.

This was perfectly obvious to me with the production of *The Dream*, a work that is the epitome of "English" lyric dancing. It should be very, elegant and courtly, but here it wasn't, it was labored, mussy and underwhelming.

Faloci's *Cavorts* is more in tune with the AB aesthetic, it dances and dances, at its

balletic and highly strong, but it is not directness or simple. It is simply a collection of dances done by people on stage, dances designed to distract or engage. It is "about" the Census of life, the constituents we fill up with action to understand ourselves, dances of discovery, sensitivity and separation. Every dancer in the work put the last ounce of energy that he had into it. Despite the free form, it is neatly structured and organized. People should realize that a serious work is not serious just by virtue of its subject matter but by the thought that has gone into it. Working in an unfamiliar idiom, the AB dancers acquitted themselves with true inventiveness and conviction.

Some part for Kalian's *Symphony in D*, a work that reflects all the banality conventions of classical ballet. Even if one doesn't know a lot of classical ballet one can still get the point of the bourgeoisie sleek connoisseur; all these Ballet like, mid-sized retreads, tangled partnerships and little bits of scene similarity. Only one criticism here, the waltz has to be exact to make its point, the "transition" should be obviously meant, sometimes they weren't and the audience was left wondering whether or not some of the gaffs and faux pas' were intentional.

the dance company 1978 season

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Ten and Thirty years on.



Melissa Chappell (Flora), Marilyn Richardson (Governess) and Alexander Cohn (Miles) in UMSW's *Turn of the Screw*.

Thirty years after its first production, Sydney's indomitable Rockdale Municipal Opera Company is still going strong, ten years after its debut production, so is Roger Cossell's University of New South Wales Opera.

In the past couple of years, they have all but monopolised the Sydney opera scene below the stately heights of the national company itself; only the odd student production at the NSW Conservatorium and the even rarer brief season of odd performances of major operas has upstaged them otherwise.

Both these companies began their 1978 seasons within a week of each other in mid-April, and with works utterly typical of the peculiar repertory mix which has enabled them to survive and keep on surviving where other scratch companies have come and gone.

The UMSW Opera was first off the mark with an amazingly successful new production of Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* (which is based, of course, on the Henry James novella of the same name). Rockdale's offering was the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta *The Mikado* of the Guard.

The University company's distinctive mix encompasses the old, the new and the off-beat. Rockdale's the standard repertory, the tried and true audience-pleasing G and S pieces, and slightly off-beat but thoroughly accessible pieces such as little-known Offenbach operettas.

The UMSW company definitely was celebrating its 10th anniversary by staging the same work it presented in its inaugural production, and in the event the 1978 performances were even more alike to the 1968 ones than originally announced.

The choice of Beverly Berigan, who had been engaged for the role of the governess

this year, meant that Marilyn Richardson — who made her operatic debut in that role in the original production — again appeared in the part. Pearl Beridge, who originally sang the role of Mrs Grose (the Governess) in 1968, again played the part this year, and Cossell, of course, was again mounting the basso.

It was said that the opening performances were marred by highly eccentric lighting through no fault of the production team, or at least very little; the music recitation of the requirement at the University's *Snow White* were compromised by the fact that a graduation ceremony upset last minute preparations for the opera. The result was very weird, giving the impression

one rather that somebody was trying to be very arty or that some club-flicked out was fumbling about backstage tripping up over the tangled cords and switches.

However, the production was very strong indeed, particularly in the adult voice department which after all must bear the brunt of the attention of any audience.

Richardson was as refreshingly forcefully and dramatically she and Ronald Dowd, who was a wonderful Quaint Master the vocal forces without any doubt. Beridge's housekeeper and Patricia Brown's governess were every bit adequate, but neither needed the dramatic attention or produced the exciting vocal sounds of Richardson and Dowd.

Alexander Cossell acquitted himself admirably in the role of the boy Miles, a part difficult just about to the point of impossibility. Dramatically he was thoroughly credible, but he was vocally wanting in the manner of all but the most gifted boy soprano. Melissa Chappell was close to perfection as the girl Flora, although as farceurs it must be noted that Flora is a much less prevalent and demanding part.

Perhaps the big trouble with the *Turn of the Screw* arose directly from the inherent impositiveness of the piece itself, which requires phantoms visible only in the mind of one character to be given vocal and — at least to some extent — visual reality. One was a good deal too conscious of the crossings created in the visual realisation of the ghostly characters.

Barry this was no doubt the fault of the last minute lighting crisis, but the apparitions were in general handled in an altogether too lumberingly sombre manner. Flora and the idea of having them appear from the backs of the stage or from the gills of the audience, the effective



Melissa Chappell (Flora), Pearl Beridge (Mrs Grose) and Marilyn Richardson (Governess) in UMSW's *Turn of the Screw*.

realization of the effects was all but impossible because of the inherent pace of the music itself, which in any open-music situation deviates the pace of the stage action.

Orchestrally, this *Five of the Seven* was very good but not as impeccable as Cossetti sometimes has managed in the past. An overall impression, even a more than deserved the three-quarters audience it had to Kremington, though, and it was quite a good curtain-raiser, as it were, for the second decade of the most ambitious, active and artistically courageous community opera group in Australia.

The Rockdale *Tea-cosy of the Guard* was another disappointing one, continuing in the context of the usual standards of this most veteran of Australian opera groups.

Two things in particular struck me about the performance, the obvious more than the usual quota of new and unfamiliar faces in the ranks of the cast and the recurrence of so many of the perennial flaws — particularly orchestral ones — that have marred every performance I have ever attended at the Rockdale Town Hall.

I cannot but regard my disappointment that so much aesthetic slippage is tolerated in the Rockdale context, for I can see the players are capable of better than they produced at least in this *Tea-cosy*. Sometimes they played very well, in fact often enough to indicate that a little further baring down from the conductor, Cedric Ashby, might not only have produced finer playing but would quite probably not even have been resisted by the musicians.

Among the soloists of the night only John Welsh (Lugus) (Colonel Farley) and Mary Blane (Diana Carruthers) and Miles Daniell (Sergeant Mervil) were Rockdale regulars. All acquitted themselves very well, in particular Blane advancing years here nobbled her ageing voice of some of its power of song, but this is an unquestionable measure of the vocal and dramatic subtleties of the G and S dragon ladies.

Wendy Oliver (Elized) and Sylvia Bryson (Pheebs), whose looks are a good deal less familiar on the Rockdale stage, were both adequate. John Collier had among the optimum mix of bluster, shyness, gaitiness and ham-karm crutch to make the most out of the strange role of Wilfred Shadwell, the head pater and amateur fortuneteller.

For the unquestionable triumph of the night was David Godber's Jack Pott. Those who saw him at Rockdale as a superb little Prince in Offenbach's *Le Paupier* a couple of years ago will need no convincing of his basic talents, and in this present role he was magnificent. Had the rest of the cast been as effective as he, this would have been a *Runaway to treasure* for a good many years to come.

Both the current offerings of the Australian Opera's programme for children *Opera On Stage* have a good deal of merit purely as entertainment for infants and primary school children.

Sof' the Serpent Who Wanted to Sing (music by Malcolm Fox, words by Ian and Susan Vitch) is angled for the little ones. Professor Kubist's *Kubist's Konzertspiele* (music by Jeff Connell, words by Richard Daniell) is aimed at a slightly more serious audience.

Sof' is a pastiche of varied musical styles justified, rather tenuously by an episodic



Barbara Colen, Coral Coad and Judy Gies in the AO's *Sof' The Serpent*
Photo: William Morely

story line which uses the hero traipsing around the globe in search of a place to sing. *Kubist* is more complex as a story line, and contains a rather disengaging but cogent message that tends to annoy rather than convert.

As one would expect, both are most professionally done and each provides a good alternative to an hour of classroom schooling. What relevance they have to opera education, however, I do not know, mainly they please rather than teach; dramatically they are at best adequate. I cannot help thinking that the best introduction to opera is opera itself even the very young can accept it at face value, do not require to have it sugar-coated and waded down either morally or dramatically.

By far the best effort I have seen in this direction is the tailored-down version of

Rossini's *Babes of Sardinia* by John Thompson, executive director of the Queensland Opera Company. It involves only a handful of singers and a set that can be packed into a trailer towed by a handi van around the bush.

But surely one of the messes is unashamedly dismal, including the mandatory audience participation duty taught to the children when music master Babbo steps momentarily out of character. The kids love it just as much as they love *Sof'* and *Professor Kubist*. Portions of other proper operas could obviously be treated the same way.

In their own way, *Sof'* and *Kubist* are just fine, but if we are really trying to expose the young to opera in the hope they will come to embrace it and love it passionately, do they go about it the right way?

Living drama from the words on a page.



Melissa Jaffer (Vi) and John Waters (Rabbit) in *Wicket of Shadows*

The thing that strikes me immediately about *Wicket of Shadows* is its truthfulness. It's a bit below the belt, the naughtiest thing to *Hide and Seek* that the Australian film industry has produced. I don't mean that the bad men are necessarily "true" than the good ones, but that the co-producer and director, Tom Jeffery has taken the thin script by Peter Verhoeven from Hugh Addison's novel *The Peacock* and got it right, without fudging.

On the face of it that may sound more negative than positive, but it's not so. By bowing to the law — no peace for sentimentalities or even endorsements — he has actually created living drama from the words on a page.

Hugh Addison's novel was set in NSW, in a town with a quarry, somewhere around, I suppose, the foothills of the Blue Mountains. Jeffery moved the locality to Macclesfield in South Australia, probably because the SA Film Corporation was putting up some of the money, with their Man, Carroll as co-producer (with Sue Mithilen). Macclesfield and environs is simply perfect, non-picturesque, the painted signs are sparse and nostalgic, time gets a look-in.

The story is about two people unacceptable to a small community, a Polish

bargain-hunting, illegal or otherwise like this is between the wars when Hitler was a tidal wave of people from Europe to our shores and Harry Rabbit, nickname Rabbit, who isn't very bright. The Pole is alien by definition, Rabbit alien because he isn't one of the boys and has a history of defiance. For one thing, when Vi, a sheltered, gormless girl, who in those days was that place was probably known as the "town bint," became pregnant less were drawn on to which of her many paramours would marry her to give the child a name, and Rabbit drew the short straw. They married, the child was born, and the small family drew together protectively against the rest of the world.

One sunny spring Sunday the town's only industry, the breakers, closes at noon and the men depart for the pub, except Rabbit, who goes home to Vi and the boy. In a few moments the place is alive with savage racism: a youth looking for an audience beats a house on the edge of the town has found Darcy Taylor lying on the bare floor, chopped into a band of red flesh by someone wielding a cleaver. The police depute Darcy was close to death by the Pole who lived in the barn and helped with the chores, in exchange for a feed over his head. He is missing.

A stark, graphic style, is organised

The sergeant carries the men to put their names down to go on the hunt, and all do, except Rabbit. Later Vi, whose life is made difficult because of Rabbit's "otherness," persuades him to do the same. She wants to walk down the street in the knowledge that her Rabbit is a man among men.

Led by the sergeant, the men — Nolan, Berndt, Collins, House, Badger, Ryan etc — take to the surrounding hills. Also Rabbit, whose secret apprenticeship to a friend in Polka, who is his neighbour. They stay out in the country, grizzling, boasting, fantasising about what they will do to the Pole when they get him. Ryan recalls that the Pole once made an off-advised appearance at the local hop and asked Ryan's wife to dance while Ryan was working bare at the back of the hall; he received for this courtesy a terrible beating-up from all and all. and Ryan plans to repeat the punishment. Only Rabbit and the school teacher, who is along more because he is a stringer for the source newspaper than due to any relish for the search — suggest that perhaps the Pole didn't kill Miss Taylor.

The men started by searching the bush, but it turns out when the drama runs out and the sergeant bulletin them. The sergeant also started out by saying it is a means to protection, but he also begins



John Waters as Harry "Baldy" Baker.

to wait.

It goes bad for the women, too. Vi is distraught with worry, the sergeant's wife, who uses the operation as a way out from country exile, looks behind her two curtains as the women come knocking at her door to find out what has happened to

their men who seem to be gone for only a few hours. The little town is wounded, a still-unfected wound. Authority in the form of a superintendent is unengaged because it hasn't been alerted. A thread of deeper stretches between the men in the hills and the women in the town.

We have seen some gunnery casting in recent films, but here the producer/director have been honest as well as, in some cases, positively inspired. The character of Baker, based on the possibly false legend that those who lack flesh, or perhaps all their necessities, are mysteriously "in tune" with nature, is played by John Waters. He exudes the personus acceptibus, appearing confident and grace in much that knowledges of the bush.

Melissa Jaffer, an actress who has often seemed unsympathetic to her roles, understands this one perfectly. Wynn Roberts, an actor good of persons, plays the sergeant who was exiled from the city when he shot two youths dead in a moment of over-excitement without actually being sure they had committed a crime. His half-witted platoon, insanely egotistic wife Milon is played by Barbara Weid with the right precision. Among the rest of the cast Graham Greene comes out as Solar, an amiable sod; Bill Hunter as Brown, trigger happy a dangerous street kid; Taggart as Ryan; Les Franscroft as Sieger the crawler; Graeme Blundell as a kind of parody of a sheepdog, nipping any passing boy!

It is hard to say what Australian audiences, or in fact any audiences, will make of this. This is a shock ending, but the theme can hardly be called anything but downbeat, and one remembers the local resistance to *Waking the Dead*. It can be assumed that people like to see themselves as men, and in *Waking the Dead* not many of them are.

The film is beautifully photographed by Richard Wallace. Another plus is Charles Marwood's evocative music.

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Class Notes and Essays 12

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Defining the drama of the seventies.

The Club — David Williamson
Downstage or Bust! by Cambridge
University Press
Price £1.50



In fitting, and nice for Currency, that they should now add to their list *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, with the promise of the complete Doll trilogy later this year. The Doll is almost too much of a "classic" now, but it should be in Currency's National Theatre canon and it is only in the last few years that it has stopped being over so, a bad example for theatre managers and playwrights alike. Now we can look back and say "it was ... not the beginning of a new start for Australian drama, but the end of an era, bringing the bush legend into the city and laying it barely to rest. If it did not also lay to rest the happy, by now notorious, oil of Australia's Nationalism, then that is hardly Lark's fault."

The Currency edition contains an interesting introduction by Katherine Shobman and a great deal of useful material from the original production — reviews and photographs. I cannot agree entirely with Ms Shobman's reading of the play. She argues that seeing the Doll as part of the tragi-comic digests can't approach it, but it is still possible to see it as a celebration of Olina's dream rather than a revelation of her childlessness. There is an immense sense of loss by the end, but that merely punctuates the play's tribute to her children. Her rejection of Ross's proposal then becomes, as Anne Summers argues, the only proper womanly response, after prioritising man's self-sacrifice, and not a childish refusal to be drawn to the gloomy realities of life.

The Club is another sign of the stability of Australia's playwrighting and of Currency Press. David Williamson's plays keep coming out, and each before the critics that he is becoming too established, or too commercial, or too popular. His humour, his insight and his craftsmanship speak for themselves so strongly in the thesis that there is little which can be said of the book. It is good that we have lost our self-conciousness about Australian plays to an extent where a play is published simply as that people who enjoyed the show can find their favorite bits again.

This is not the case with Peter Kenna. Kenna has kept up on no raffish and the publication of these three plays gives us an opportunity to try and see how *With A Third God* and now with *The Candy Album*, built up from *A Hard God*, he has found an established place in theatre, but on the whole he has never been a popular or an often-produced writer. The three plays in this volume have all had small productions but they have had little impact in the theatre generally. Frightfully,

then, they are published in an expensive hard-cover, which serious students of drama who wish to see some of Kenna's earlier work, will want to buy. This is a pity in a way, for Kenna is an important writer whose particular exploration of family life should be interesting to everyone. He has a nice feeling of detached observation, as if everyday life were an exercise to which his characters (and he and his audience) are passionately committed, but which is a more surface representation of a deeper reality lurking beneath. This is probably the world of his "hard god" in which people "have to struggle on blindly with an empty, ringing down on us like thunder."

The last Taurua Play is *Fathers and Fathers* by Hugh Macpherson. It amuses me that anyone would want to see or produce, let alone read or publish, this banal and offensive piece of rubbish, and yet in the theatre it has been highly successful. It is apparently the longest but in New Zealand theatre history. This is the remonstrance from the real world of people who write in magazines received, if I dared bring myself to outline the "repulsive but funny story" which the play presents, but to be fair it is banal to said that you would ever guess from Bill Macpherson's production at the Old Tote last year. Sadly the implied attacks on directors in the author's preface are directed at the Tote production. The play may perform a lot longer than I imagine, given Macpherson's talents.

The last in the series of Currency Double Bills is a volume of two one-act plays by Mary Gaige and Bill Steiner, both concerning the problems facing people who move into a new environment. Neither is particularly agreeable, but both deal effectively with the alienation and dislocation of living among strangers. Mary Gaige's play, *Barbarically*, encapsulates the whole dilemma during her lifetime, in a nast and finally moving theatrical observation.

Currency Press is in a position of great responsibility in Australian drama. Playing a critical role in the plays they control, which plays will come to general attention and which will hole into obscurity after their production, has ended. In years to come dozens of the '70s will be more or less defined by the plays Currency publishes, just as dozens of the late '80s is defined now by the handful of short plays which were published then. The general range of their titles in impressive (even if the series of one-acts looks a little conservative). It is to be hoped that Currency continues to live up to their responsibility.

Currency Press has come a long way in the last ten years. From the first, somewhat tame series of volumes, sold by subscription to enthusiasts and professionals, they have grown to become Australia's major drama publishers. Leaving their rivals Mifflin, Press, Edward Arnold, Heinemann, and QUPP far in the background. With the early series there was a tinge of scraping around for plays to partly the catalogue. The new batch of plays show how Currency and Australian playwriting have progressed. Currency now has forty two titles. They have brought a number of New Zealand plays in association with Price Metheus called Taurua Plays. The dramatic Theatre Quarterly plays (first while TV distributor Currency plays in the United Kingdom) And they have brought out into general publishing, on a small scale, with a volume of cartoons by Australia's wittiest cartoonist, Patrick Cook.

GUIDE**A.C.T.****THE BARD'S THEATRE RESTAURANT**

(07) 51644

Blue Note Productions

Commemorative Performance in honour of the visit of H M Edward VII on the occasion of the Federation of the Commonwealth of Australia
 Directed and directed by Gordon Todd, with
 Michael Frederick. Thursday to Saturday
 Commemoration.

CANBERRA OPERA (02) 23448

Opera in the Schools

The Happy Prince by Tchaikovsky. Producer,
 Paul Coates, Director, Bill Beeton. Touring
 ACT schools July

CANBERRA THEATRE (02) 23448

London Theatre Company

Cast by Steve Beresford, Director, Steve Beresford
 29 May — 2 June

The Australian Ballet

Janet Jolley

T:08 22123 May

CHILDREN'S STREET HALL (06) 47113

Corporate Productions

What's Coming Up? in Business Areas by Roger
 Paterson. Directed by Alison Gathorne. On tour
 from Newcastle 14 — 24 June

EDGAR COMPANY (07) 57711

In repertory: *Act Now*, a documentary for
 schools, on self-government in the ACT; *Cromer* and *Ci*, a participation play for children; *The Empty House*, a participation play for
 preschools; *Prometheus*, a participation play for
 primary schools. Various locations

PLAYHOUSE (08) 14200

Cultures Philanthropic Society

The Sound of Music 29 June — 1 July**THEATRE** (07) 42121

The Department by David Williamson
 Director, Anne Geddes Smith. 7 June — 1
 July

TIVOLI THEATRE RESTAURANT (09) 51111

Cantabria Professional Group

Venice in Capri directed by Tim Taylor and
 John Newman. Director, Jim Hutchins. Friday
 and Saturday: Dining room

NEW SOUTH WALES**ACTOR'S COMPANY** (06) 23233

Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare,
 directed by Steve Agnew, with Kim Ferguson
 and Dallas Lewis. To June 10

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams,

directed by Rodney Delaney, with Betty Cossell
 and Debra Cossell. From June 10

ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES (02) 61111

The Grand Adventure a musical comedy
 musical tour created and directed by Philip
 Elliston. New South Wales country tour from
 June 12

Mouse Mischief a country rock group. New
 South Wales country tour from June 13

Shout by Anthony Shaffer, with Sydney
 Cheshire and Steven Purcell. New South
 Wales country tour from June 14

Scholes' One Star of Six Contemporary
 Saxophone Quartet with Colin Smith, Sydney
 metropolitan and New South Wales music
 universities. Sydney metropolitan, South
 Coast and Broken Hill. Bob Gilmore —
 violinist, pianist and musician. Returns to
 Sydney metropolitan area. Alex Head
 guitarist and singer. Blamey Valley and North
 Coast areas. Kooriwoa and Major Mungose by
 Tom Wright. Sydney metropolitan area

AUSTRALIAN OPERA (02) 23726

Makomo Rarotonga by Pōmare. In Berlin June
 14, 17, 20, 23, 26

Marriage of Figaro by Mozart in English
 June 24-26

AUSTRALIAN THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (09) 93121

Knights by Richard Tallack, directed by Dr
 Denis — for older schools

The Fabulous Cuckoo by Richard Tallack
 directed by Jane Westwood

Running Away by Michael Cawé, directed by
 Raymond Omodeo

*The Actor or Host or Childish and Shrewd and
 Juliet* Directed by Raymond Omodeo
 North West Arts Board 78

ENSEMBLE THEATRE (09) 91873

Apollonius by Stewart Parker, directed by Dan
 Reid. From June 1

FRANK STRAYHORN (09) 74 8381

Music of Tomorrow with Matt Buckley, Ruth
 Broad, John Fullerton, Neil Bryant and Alan
 Norman, directed by Frank Strayhorn, choreo-

graphed by George Lander

GENDARM THEATRE (02) 38239

First Home of the Sun by Peter Shaffer,
 directed by Tim Healy. To June 14

H.M.S. MAJESTY'S (02) 34111

Bare Necessities in Four & Parkinson at No. 10
 June

MAHIAN STREET (08) 11661

What Every Woman Knows by James Barrie.

Directed by Alastair Duncan. From June 9

MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA (02) 16110

Blankie the Double-O directed by Richard
 Bradbury and Steve Hansen. Three week
 Sydney westerninfest tour.

MUSIC HALL THEATRE RESTAURANT (08) 93321

Created by Disney written and directed by
 Michael Boddy. Comedic

MUSIC LOFT THEATRE (09) 43805

Evolve a musical show starring the Toppman
 family and Lee Young

NEW THEATRE (09) 34005

The Bloody Accent Motor Show by John
 Robert and the APG, directed by Paul Quinn
 with musical direction, John Stoen and designer,
 Rob Eagle. To June 10

Foolish Mr. Thaddeus by Kevin Morgan
 directed by John Armstrong. From June 10

NOIRISHO THEATRE (09) 34012

Upstart Crown of Errors by William
 Shakespeare, directed by John Bell. To June 11

Henry IV by William Shakespeare, directed by
 Richard Wherrett, with John Bell, Frank Wilson
 and Alexander Hay. From June 11

NO 18 THEATRE RESTAURANT

Al Capone's Birthday Party by Pat Garvey
 directed and produced by Pat Garvey, choreo-
 graphy by Keith Little, set by Doug Anderson,
 costume by Sue Wilson. Comedic

OLD TOWN (02) 6121213

Drama Theatre *The Moonstone* by Wilkie, directed
 by Ted Crean, with Ross Fitzpatrick,
 Trevor Keen, John Fox, Barry Otto, Graham
 Rushell, David Riddiford, Ben Ratcliff. To June 12

PRIVATE THEATRE (02) 5161100

Staged by Hugh Lawless, designed by
 Peter Collingwood with Maggie Kirkpatrick,
 Max McLean, Alan John, Tom Padley, Tom
 Parkinson, Don Robins, Joanne Noel, Chris
 Crowley. To July 11

PARADE THEATRE (02) 91944

The Five Companies in *Frederick's Cross* by
 Dorothy Howitt, with composer Ralph Tyrell,
 and lighting designer, David Read. From June
 15

OSCAR'S HOLLYWOOD PALACE

THEATRES RESTAURANT. See Box
 (02) 44425

Four Fair Four Men by Dan Savage and
 Peter Price. Director, Ian Young. Comedic.

Q THEATRE (09) 2147355

Colour Me Bitter, Ham, directed by Kevin
 Jackson. Period June 7-15, Eastnor June 20
 July 2

SEYMORE CENTRE (07) 8233

YORK THEATRE *As You Like It* by William Shakespeare, directed by Graham Corry with the Playtime Theatre Company From June 10

SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE (02) 8588

Opera Theatre Australian Opera Programmes Their Appearance of a Four Men with Angels New work by Graeme Murphy

Australian Opera Modern Romances by Puccini with Luciano Martelli From June 14

Merger of Forces by Mozart with Giacomo Leopardi From June 24

Edith Cowan Hall *Conductor* Conductor Robert Hunter

THEATRE ROYAL (02) 8510

One Fish, Two Fish by Paul Green with Nancy Hayes, Carol Burns, Pat Bishop and Marlene Linton To June 24

WHITE HORSE HOTEL Newcastle (02) 13823

Over to Death by Peter Shepherd directed by Peter Shepherd with Peter Fisher, Grant Duffield, Sue Kerr, Dennis Lucy, Grahame Richards, May Hoskin, Sam Pugh, Terry McNaught, choreographer Ian Taylor, Kelly Smith, Peter Gilmour, designer, throughout From

Graeme Bryan Nason, designer, Fiana Reilly, music by Ralph Tyrrell, choreography by Keith Bon, with Cindy Raymond, Diane Burn, Michael McCaffery, Mark Hindmarsh, Constanza

TWELFTH NIGHT THEATRE (02) 5818

The Puppet People with Steven (Pappert) Garsen and Paul Hillis Commencing June 24

SOUTH AUSTRALIA**ADELAIDE FRINGE THEATRE (02) 2384**

Playhouse (some of new works) From 17 July 1

ADELAIDE REPERTORY THEATRE (02) 2373

13 August Street

The Caucasian Chalk Circle by Tennessee Williams, director, Philippa Page, June 10/17

ADELAIDE THEATRE GROUP (02) 2323

Starline Theatre 10 McKinnon Rd A Woman's Tale by Shakespeare, director Brian Bellman, Tues to Sat June 1-14

Q THEATRE (02) 5541

19 Hurtle Street

Present Laughter by Noel Coward, director Bill O'Day, May 20 June 17

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN THEATRE COMPANY (02) 231510

Requiem Mass by Ross Marle, director, Colin George, designer, April 26/27, June 1/17

STATE OPERA OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA (02) 231431

La Bohème by Verdi in English From 22 June 8

QUEENSLAND**ARTS THEATRE (07) 328-5541**

Hans Christian Andersen by Paul Keating (Mystery Theatre) Director Margaret Brown, May 25 to June 16

Nude with Underwear by Paul Cernuda, Director Marion Gould, June 29 July 19

LA BOHÈME (07) 328-5520

Cyrano de Bergerac by Stephen Poliakoff, Director Jennifer Mackay, Designer, Glynne Johnson, with Craig Colvin as Loring Broad, May 25 to June 17

The Good Person of Sèzanne by Derrick Brooks, produced by John Walker, Director Fred Murphy, June 21 to July 13

MER MAJESTY'S (07) 327777

Thoughts of Obsession A/F with Warren Marshall as All Quester, in association with the Queensland Theatre Co, Commencing June 12/14

QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY (07) 328111

King Lear by William Shakespeare, Director Alan Edwards, designer, Peter Cook, with Warren Marshall as King Lear, Ian Collett, Gordon Clewings, Alastair Newman and Geoff Rush, *Play of Desires* by Ivan Aivazoff, Director Joe MacCann, designer, Fiana Reilly, with Alan Wilson and Guy Pook, Commencing June 21

REALITY THEATRE

G & M Promotions by arrangement with Harry Milner and by special arrangement with Michael White Ltd, The Rocky Horror Show

Stephen Blacklow and Neville Stern, Med to Sat, New Asia New angles

FLYING TRAPEZE CAFE (01) 32721

Scandalous Extravaganza To June 3, The Star, Windsor St, showing the Trapeze Hot Shots From June 6

EDOPLA PHOENIX THEATRE (02) 7640

Playbox Theatre, 1st Flr 100 Pitt Street, Circular Quay, Director, Michael Dafford, with Peter Martin, Randall Cunningham, Ursula, Jonathan, Broadway, by Gordon Granger, To June 17

The Everett Holifield by Sam Wasson From June 21, Thursdays to Saturdays 11.00 p.m., Fridays 9.00 p.m.

PC WILLIAMSON THEATRES

Her Majesty's Theatre, A Cinema Zone, Commering, Comedy Theatre, *Love Thy Neighbor* with Jack Thompson and Steve Baker, Sunday To July 7

EAST LAUNDRY THEATRE RESTAURANT (02) 412261

New show opening June 2 to be announced

LA MANIA (02) 4100

Last of Port by Ian Nash, Directed by Karen Scott, Watson, June 1-18, Thurs, Fri 8.30pm, Arts a play by Ian Nash, Watson, June 1-18, Fri 8.30pm

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY (03) 414000

Russell Street Theatre, Deparment by Murray Rutherford, Directed by Bruce Mylne, To July 7

Admission Theatre, The Brass, Deparment by George Frangalas, Directed by Frank Hamer, To June 10

Alibis by Sophocles, Directed by Frank Hamer, From June 13

NATIONAL THEATRE (02) 81211

Whistlers Musical Theatre production, *La Silver*, June 1-13

PILGRIM PUPPET THEATRE (03) 66300

After the Breakfast, adapted by Bert Cooper, director, Robert Alan

PRINCESS THEATRE (02) 27111

The Victorian State Opera Company, *Antenor*, by Mozart, June 21-24, 26-29, July 1

TRICK & JOKES THEATRE LOUNGE (03) 17340

GM Time Miss Hill, John & Trish Newman, Myrna Roberts, Vic Gordon, Tues-Sat, *Kookaburra*, Doctor Tony North, Brett Hansen, Barry Conner, Alles, Alie, Karet, Tues-Sat

VICTORIAN STATE OPERA (03) 58601

Schools programme, *Young*, *Monsters at Picnic*, *Barber*

Major Author Composers, *Play*, *Music*, these theatres for detailed car hire publications

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HEDDERING REPERTORY (Co. Rep. 129)

MALVERN THEATRE COMPANY (211-0226)

PUMPKIN THEATRE, Richmond (412 8221)

THEATRE, Fremantle (09 6614)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

LIVIC THEATRE RESTAURANT (211-1959)

Laughter Committee director, Brian Smith

HATMAN THEATRE, WATSONS BAY

Dear Oregon Director Tony Nichols June 11 July 1

HOLE IN THE WALL (211-1960)

Waiting for Guffman by Stephen Sondheim Director Mike Morris June 11

Hole in the Wall workshop production

Abby (Orchard Rehearsed) by Diana Rigg Director Damon Janecon June 21 July 1

NATIONAL THEATRE (211-1960)

Playhouse

A Street Named Desire by Tennessee Williams Director, Stephen Sondheim May 21 June 21

A Night and a Nocturne by John O'Farrell June 21 July 1

Clothesline

Mr Jinx by Angus Scrimmberg From May and continuing

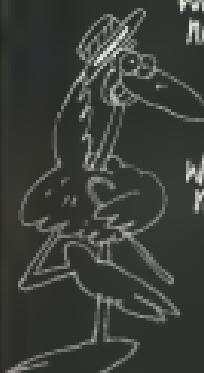
REGAL THEATRE (211-1970)

My Fair Lady Director Paul Elmer, with Eric Sykes and Shirley Edwards June 11

WEST AUSTRALIAN BALLET COMPANY Not playing during June

Theatre Australia

What
next?



What
Next?

Next Month

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Shakespeare on the Australian stage

Playscript: Peter Kennedy's *Furtive Love*

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